



# The Greater Kansas City Early Care and Education Landscape Study: Final Summary Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE

Given that research shows early care and education (ECE) programs can have an important impact on children's school readiness and later success in life, the Kansas City Early Education Funders Collaborative commissioned a landscape survey to better understand the existing ECE programs within Jackson County, Missouri (Phase 1) and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, Kansas (Phase 2). Because of the wealth of information contained in each survey report, this summary report represents an effort to provide a synthesis of findings focused on characteristics of Missouri and Kansas programs. The purpose of this report is threefold: (1) to provide background information about relevant national, state, and local policies and conditions that affect the Greater Kansas City ECE landscape; (2) to summarize the pertinent descriptive information and provide a synthesis of findings from the two previous landscape reports within sociodemographic and policy contexts; and (3) to identify gaps in the ECE landscape across the metropolitan region.

## RELEVANT NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL POLICIES

Over the last few decades, the federal government has taken an active role in improving access to high quality ECE by providing assistance to states and providing funds for programs, training, and technical assistance. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) helps states pay for child care for low-income families. Through this fund, states increase access to ECE by providing funds to families to subsidize their child care costs and also invest in improving quality through teacher training and grants to child care providers for learning materials. Head Start/Early Head Start is the program administered by the federal government that provides educational, social, health, and nutritional services to promote school readiness for children from families with low incomes. Other more recent sources of federal funding for ECE include the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge and Preschool Development Grants (none of which Missouri or Kansas has received). In addition, programs run by school districts may use Part B and C funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Title I to fund ECE.

States play a large role in the regulation and funding of ECE programs. Licensing rules and regulations differ between Missouri and Kansas. In particular, all Kansas ECE facilities must be inspected (due to Lexie's Law signed in 2010), which is not the case for some of Missouri's programs. Child care subsidy policies also differ between the two states with respect to subsidy rates for ECE programs. According to federal recommendations, states should set their child care subsidy rates no lower than the 75th percentile of market rate (high enough to access 75% of providers). However, Kansas pays providers at approximately the 40th percentile, and Missouri at about the 45th percentile, which means that families using child care subsidies cannot easily access over half of the programs in their region. In Missouri, ECE providers may also receive increases called rate differentials in addition to the daily base subsidy rates. Programs can receive rate differentials if they are accredited by certain state-approved entities, if they serve children with special needs, and/or if 50% of the children they serve receive state subsidy.

Missouri and Kansas also differ with respect to family eligibility requirements for child care subsidies. Both states provide child care subsidies for parents who are working and/or attending school. In Missouri, families with gross incomes below 138% of the federal poverty level can qualify, whereas in Kansas, families below 185% are eligible.

In Kansas, the work and education requirements are stricter than in Missouri (e.g., in Kansas, students have a lifetime limit of 24 months of eligibility). Subsidy usage has declined in Jackson, Johnson, and Wyandotte Counties since 2013, partly based on families' frequent cycling on and off the subsidy program, interfering with their ability to access consistent care, which is crucial for the social-emotional development of young children. The new Child Care and Development Block Grant law lengthens eligibility periods to 12 months so families have more stable subsidies over time, which is more likely to support continuity of care and relationships between children and their providers.

Both states have state-supported preschool programs. In Missouri, the Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) operates in public schools, community-based child-care centers, and nonprofit agencies. In 2014-2015, MPP was offered in 30% of districts in the state, and 95% of MPP children were enrolled in programs that were operated by a public school. In Jackson County, four of the twelve school districts currently participate in MPP. Kansas has two state-funded preschool programs. The Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten Program provides funding directly to public schools, although schools may subcontract with community-based organizations to provide services. Nine out of the ten school districts in Johnson and Wyandotte participated. The other program is the Kansas Preschool Program. In Wyandotte and Johnson Counties, two of the ten school districts participated in the Kansas Preschool Program. Grants are awarded to school districts and nonprofit community partnerships or community agencies on behalf of a coalition of service providers. Although important elements in the ECE system, these programs are not sufficiently funded to provide universal prekindergarten for all children in either state.

One approach to informing consumers about the quality of available ECE programs is the use of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which summarizes the quality of programs into an overall rating. Both Missouri and Kansas had a QRIS until 2012, when both were abandoned (in Missouri, due to legislation; in Kansas, due to funding). Both states plan to begin funding new QRIS pilot projects in 2017.

Accreditation is frequently used as an indicator of quality for ECE programs. Supporting early care and education programs to achieve national or state accreditation has been a focus of quality initiatives in the Greater Kansas City area for over twenty years. In the three counties, the number of accredited programs reached its highest level in 2006, 161 programs, and has dropped off considerably since. In 2012 the Missouri Legislature trimmed \$10 million in funding for ECE programs, including accreditation support.

## DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND ECE COUNTY PROFILES

The three counties covered by the two survey projects differ with respect to demographic and economic conditions, as well as ECE characteristics. Johnson County fares better on all economic indicators than Jackson and Wyandotte Counties. For example, the 2015 median household income for Johnson was \$82,892, compared to \$48,212 in Jackson and \$41,800 in Wyandotte. Johnson County also has fewer minorities compared to Jackson and Wyandotte. Whites make up 81% of Johnson County's population, but only 63% and 42% of Jackson and Wyandotte's population, respectively (2015 ACS estimates). Wyandotte County has the largest proportion of Hispanics/Latinos (28%) of all three counties. Based on the number of children under six years old with all parents in the labor force, as well as the number of spots available in licensed programs, the need for licensed child care exceeds the licensed capacity available in all three counties. The cost of child care also differs among the three counties. Average weekly child care costs are highest in Johnson, followed by Wyandotte, then Jackson. For example, center-based care for an infant under one year costs an average of \$294 a week in Johnson, \$198 in Wyandotte, and \$173 in Jackson.

## METHOD

The Family Conservancy (TFC) was the lead agency for the Greater Kansas City Early Care and Education Landscape Study, with the Juniper Gardens Children's Project (University of Kansas) and the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (University of Missouri) as collaborating subcontractors.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were addressed by the survey.

- 1: What are children's demographic characteristics?
- 2: What are the programs' characteristics?
- 3: What are program staff characteristics?

## POPULATION OF PROVIDERS AND PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED

To address the research questions, the following types of ECE programs were recruited:

- **School-based programs** were school district Pre-K programs located in school district facilities, which are exempt from licensure.
- **Center-based programs** were licensed child care centers able to serve more than 20 children. Also included here were licensed group home programs that are able to serve 11-20 children who are not relatives of the provider that may be located in the operator's residence.
- **Home-based programs** were licensed homes operated by an individual in her/his residence, caring for up to 10 children who are not relatives of the operator.

Three surveys were developed specifically for each program type. Across both phases a total of 414 programs were surveyed: 25 school-based, 248 center-based, and 141 home-based programs. The programs employed over 5,500 staff and served about 26,000 children. The Phase 1 surveys were conducted in spring/summer of 2015, and the Phase 2 in spring/summer of 2016. The survey return rate for Phase 1 was 58% and 50% for Phase 2.

## LIMITATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

One drawback of survey research is that the data are based on self-report, which relies on the memory and knowledge of the respondents. Some programs were reluctant to share financial data, including staff pay, which resulted in missing data.

Due to differences in licensing regulations, there are far more licensed homes in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties than in Jackson County. We chose to recruit a sample of homes in the Kansas counties, rather than recruiting from the population as we did in Jackson County. As a result, the number of home-based programs—and the associated number of children served—is not representative of home-based programs for Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

The school-based program data represents information for most school district early childhood programs. However, because school districts were given the option to complete more than one survey if they had more than one early childhood program within the district, the sample size for school-based programs represents 11 overall district responses (representing 27 programs) and 14 specific school-based program responses (from 5 districts).

Due to project fiscal considerations, there were no direct assessments of program or class quality, which limits the ability of this study to draw any definite conclusions about the quality of early learning programs.

## SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS ACROSS GREATER KANSAS CITY

Below are key results from Phases 1 and 2. Broadly speaking, most of the differences seen between regions are due to the disparate policy contexts of Missouri and Kansas. The policy differences with respect to child care subsidy and accreditation all favor Missouri programs. Most of the discrepancies between program types, which typically favor school-based programs over centers and homes, can be attributed to differences in resources and expectations for accountability.

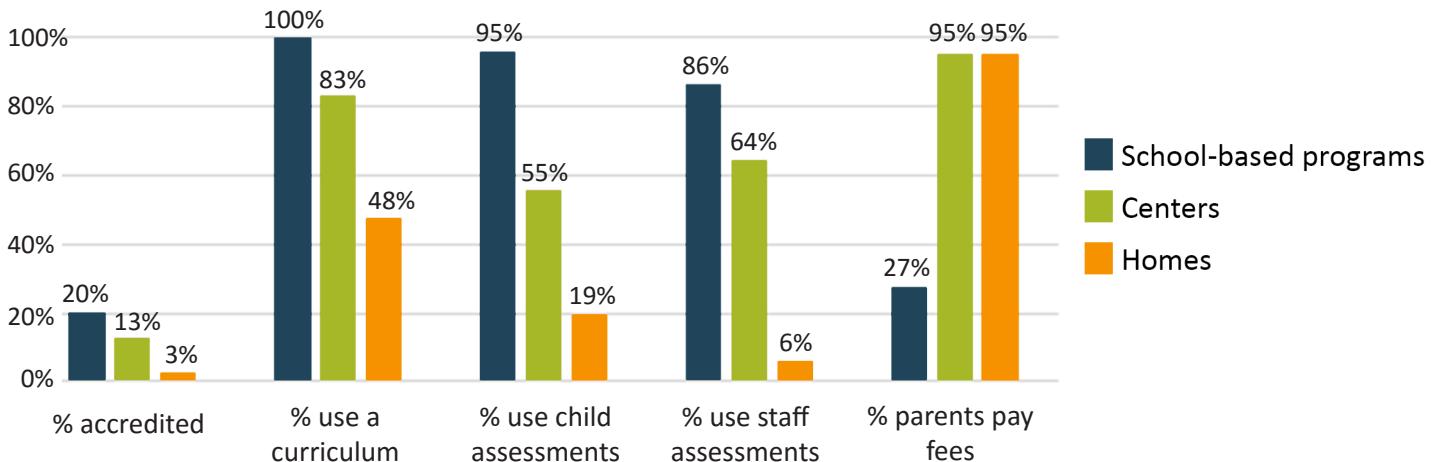
### Program Characteristics

For the programs surveyed across the three counties, centers served the majority of children (74%), followed by school-based programs (22%), then home-based programs (4%). (Note that the figure served by homes is not representative of the actual number served across the three counties). As shown in Figure 1, school-based programs, centers, and homes differed with respect to program characteristics across both phases. Compared to centers and homes, school-based programs were more likely to be accredited, use a curriculum, assess children, and employ staff assessments. In turn, centers were more likely than homes to meet these conditions. Centers and homes relied most heavily on parent fees, as well as child care subsidies, to fund their programs. Schools reported access to other funding sources, such as Head Start and state-based preschool grants, which are not easily available to centers and not available at all to homes.

One of the most important findings is the lack of accredited programs in both regions, which is especially noteworthy in Kansas where no school-based or home-based programs were accredited in the sample. Because of differing state policies, Missouri programs have more incentives and supports to reach accreditation than Kansas programs.

Figure 1

Selected Program Characteristics across Phases 1 and 2



Schools  $n = 25$

Centers  $n = 248$

Homes  $n = 141$

Note:  $n$ 's may differ by indicator

## Child Characteristics

As shown in Figure 2, the programs surveyed served more children three years and older (67%) than children younger than three (33%). Children under the age of three were served mostly in homes and centers, whereas school-based programs almost exclusively served children three years or older (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

Children Served by Age Group across Phases 1 and 2

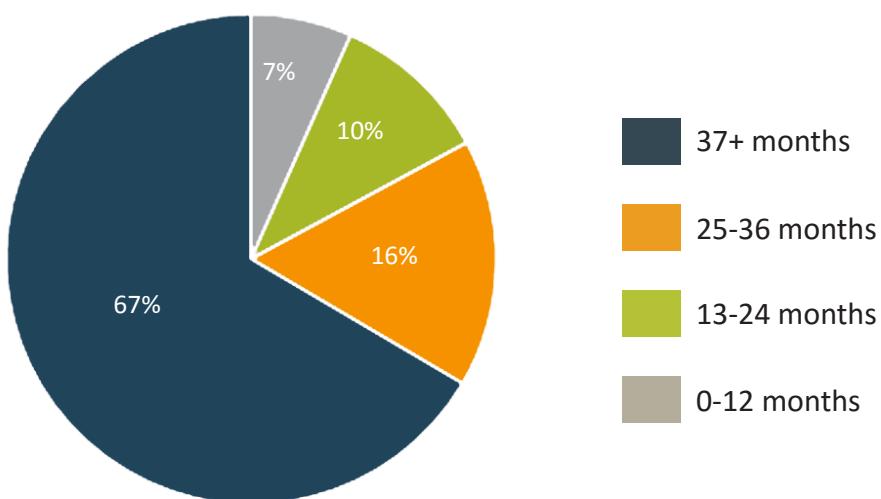
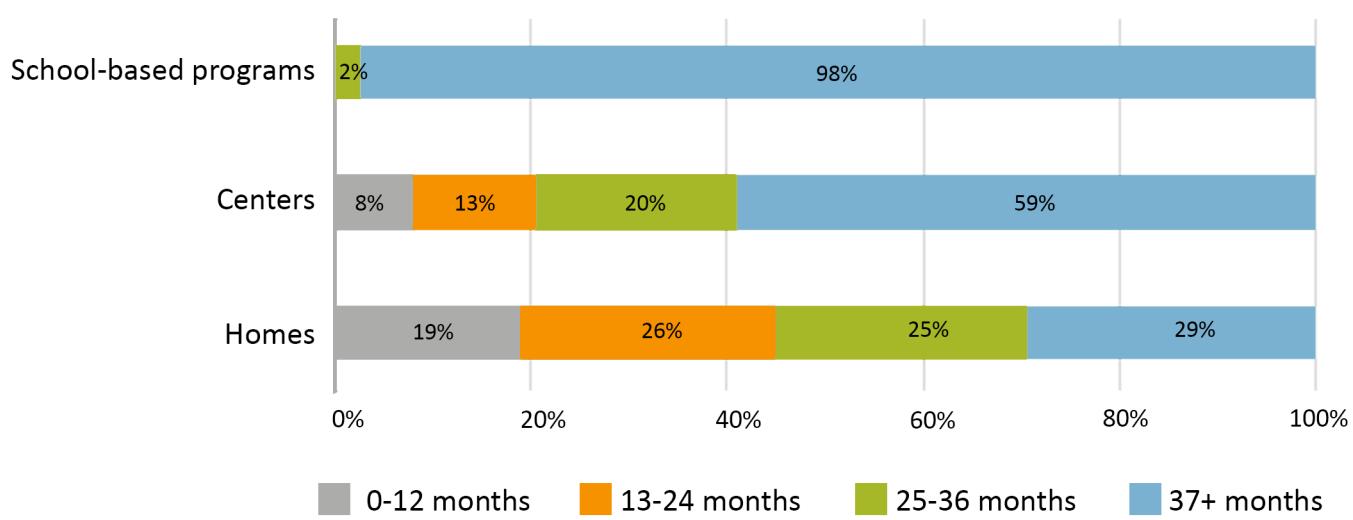


Figure 3

Age of Children Served by Program Type across Phases 1 and 2



Schools  $n = 5,698$

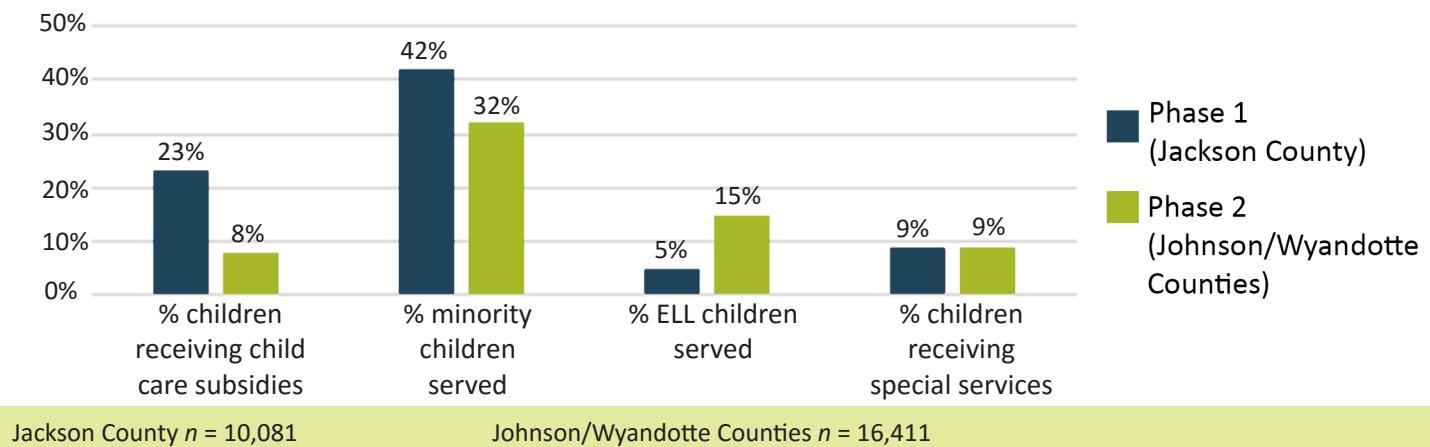
Centers  $n = 18,401$

Homes  $n = 1,009$

As shown in Figure 4, the characteristics of children served by the participating programs differed between phases. Programs in Johnson/Wyandotte Counties served a larger proportion of English Language Learners (ELLs) than those in Jackson County. Two reasons for the discrepancy between the two regions are the higher percentage of Latinos/Hispanics and the higher percentage of residents who speak languages other than English on the Kansas side. For both regions, more ELL children were served in school-based programs than in centers and homes.

**Figure 4**

**Selected Child Characteristics by Phase**



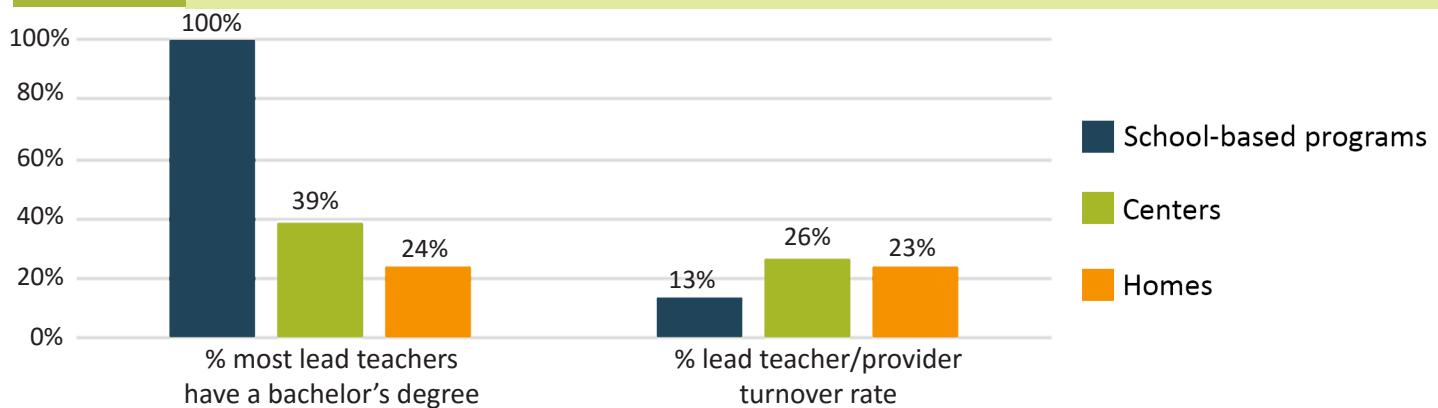
A critical finding is that the two regions differed in the extent to which they served children from families with low incomes. Programs in Jackson County served a larger percentage of children receiving subsidies (23%) than those in Johnson/Wyandotte (8%), mostly due to differences in income demographics and the greater availability of child care subsidies in Missouri. Fortunately, families with low incomes on both sides appeared to be accessing the few accredited programs at roughly the same rate as families with higher incomes.

However, the data suggest that there were differences between the two regions with respect to how frequently minority children accessed accredited programs. In Jackson County, accredited programs served a higher percentage of minority children than non-accredited programs (62% vs. 38%). In Johnson/Wyandotte Counties, the opposite was true (17% vs. 34%). A potential reason for this difference is that most of the accredited programs on the Kansas side were in Johnson County, which has relatively fewer minority children compared to Wyandotte and Jackson Counties.

**Staff Characteristics**

As shown in Figure 5, there were large differences in highest education level for lead teachers/providers among program types. All school-based programs reported that most of their lead teachers had a bachelor's degree or higher. For centers, the percentage was significantly lower, with home providers the least likely to report having a bachelor's degree. There were also county differences; a higher percentage of Johnson County programs (53%) reported that most of their lead teachers/providers have a bachelor's degree compared to programs in Jackson (25%) and Wyandotte (31%) Counties.

Figure 5 also shows that lead teacher/provider turnover rates were lower in school-based programs than centers and homes in both phases. Higher wages, better benefits, and stability of school-based positions contribute to the retention of lead teachers in schools.

**Figure 5****Selected Staff Characteristics by Program Type**Schools *n* = 25Centers *n* = 248Homes *n* = 141

Note. The turnover rate for homes is actually the percent of home providers who reported they were considering closing.

**Figure 6****Average Starting Wages for Lead Teachers by Program Type**Schools *n* = 12Centers *n* = 232

As shown in Figure 6, starting hourly wages for school-based lead teachers were more than twice that for center lead teachers in both regions. (Home providers were not asked about their wages.) The differences in education level for lead teachers in school-based programs and centers explains much of the difference in average hourly wages for teachers in these two groups. For the most part, wages were similar across both regions.

The survey findings about the staff pipeline to programs yielded some interesting differences among program types. Across both regions, school staff cited working in the same program but in a different position (e.g., moving from assistant to lead teacher) as their most common prior employment status. Center staff were most likely to cite working in a different program but in a similar position, which corresponds with the turnover rate seen in centers. Home-based providers across both regions were most likely to report that their job prior to working as a provider was in a field outside of education. Given that home providers were less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to school-based and center lead teachers, these findings taken together suggest that home providers generally have less experience and qualifications than teachers working in centers and schools.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the background information and findings from the Phase 1 and 2 reports, the following conclusions are drawn about the ECE landscape of Greater Kansas City.

### **The child population served by participating ECE programs is diverse.**

- The percentage of minority children served by participating Jackson County programs was 42%, compared to 32% for programs in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.
- In Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, 15% of children served by participating programs were ELL, compared to 5% for Jackson County.
- Across all three counties, 9% of children received special services.
- In Jackson County, 23% of children received child care subsidies compared to 8% of children in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties. The difference between the two regions is partly based on demographics as well as policy differences between the two states.

### **Most children served by participating programs were three years or older.**

- Two-thirds of children served were ages 36 months or older, whereas one third were less than three years old.
- Children under the age of three were served mostly in homes and centers, whereas school-based programs almost exclusively served children three years or older.

### **The proportion of accredited ECE programs is low.**

- Twelve percent of Jackson County programs were accredited, compared to 7% of Johnson/Wyandotte County programs.
- In the three counties, the number of accredited programs reached its highest level in 2006 and has decreased considerably since.

### **State-based incentives and supports for accreditation and quality improvement are lacking.**

- Neither state has a currently functioning QRIS system. Both states are planning pilots for 2017.
- In Missouri, state funds for increasing ECE program quality and helping programs achieve accreditation were cut in 2012. There are currently no state dollars for accreditation support.
- Missouri provides some incentives for programs to achieve accreditation by offering enhanced child care subsidies to programs that are accredited. Kansas does not have similar policies.
- Kansas currently has no incentives or state-based programs to support accreditation or quality improvement.

### **Compared to school-based programs, centers and homes have fewer financial resources.**

- Centers and homes rely most heavily on parent fees, as well as child care subsidies, to fund their programs.
- Lack of resources and supports likely impacts the ability of centers and homes to hire qualified staff and to embrace important aspects of quality, including curriculum usage, use of child assessments to inform instruction, and staff assessments.

### **Compared to school-based programs, centers and homes tend to have less qualified teachers.**

- Center teachers and home providers typically make less money, have fewer benefits, and have less education than school-based teachers.
- Teacher turnover is higher in centers than schools, partly due to the disparities in wages and benefits. One-quarter of home providers reported that they were thinking of closing in the coming year.

# INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence that high-quality early care and education (ECE) improves children's development and increases their academic achievement, thereby providing a critically important investment in human capital necessary for sustaining economic growth. Research has shown that participation in ECE programs can improve children's language, cognitive, social, and physical development in the years prior to schooling. This is particularly true for low-income children where experience in early learning environments can bolster children's skills so they are more likely to succeed in school. Children who have attended high quality pre-kindergarten programs have been found to be 30% more likely to complete high school and twice as likely to attend college. Moreover, on average, these children lived healthier lives and became more productive members of the workforce (e.g., Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001, 2002). Such gains provide immediate and sustained economic benefits by strengthening local tax bases and reducing employee absenteeism and turnover (Shellenback, 2004). Longer-term benefits in the form of positive educational, social, and health outcomes have been found to reduce public sector costs, leading Nobel laureate James Heckman to estimate a 13% annual return on investment (Garcia, Heckman, Leaf, & Prados, 2016; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003).

While the value and importance of early care and education to individuals, families, and society is widely recognized, it is clear that quality programs supporting children's early development are not accessible to all families. High quality ECE programs are often very limited for low-income families and families of color (Barnett, Carolan, & Johns, 2013). Unlike K-12 public education, a universal system of early education does not yet exist in this nation.

Little is known but much is surmised about existing ECE programs in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan area that spans two states (Missouri and Kansas) and three contiguous counties (Jackson County, MO; Wyandotte and Johnson Counties, KS), including where they are located, who they serve, what services they provide, who provides the services, how they are funded, and their greatest needs. Recognizing the value of ECE to the future capacity of young children to grow intellectually and serve as contributing citizens to a democratic society, the Early Education Funders Collaborative (the Collaborative) has sought to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the diversity existing in ECE programs for use in its strategic planning of future investments and strategies for improvement in the Greater Metropolitan area.

Beginning in 2014, the Collaborative commissioned a geographically focused survey of existing programs in Jackson County, followed about 12 months later by a second survey of Kansas counties (Wyandotte and Johnson). Separate detailed reports describe findings from each survey (Phase 1, *The Greater Kansas City Early Care and Education Landscape Study Final Report: Jackson County, Missouri* available at <https://www.growyourgiving.org/sites/default/files/GKC-Early-Care-and-Education-Landscape-Report.pdf>; and Phase 2, *The Greater Kansas City Early Care and Education Landscape Study Final Report: Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, Kansas*, which is also available at [www.growyourgiving.org](http://www.growyourgiving.org) website). The survey effort was led by The Family Conservancy, with technical research support provided by the Juniper Gardens Children's Project, University of Kansas, and the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, University of Missouri-Columbia. Each survey report provides an empirical snapshot of the ECE opportunities available in each geographical area by describing characteristics of early learning programs, the staff employed, and the children served. The findings have value for a broad audience with a stake in improving and expanding ECE in the Kansas City metropolitan area, including policy makers, philanthropic leaders, elected officials, early education advocates, and community members.

Because of the wealth of information contained in each report, this summary report represents an effort to provide a synthesis of findings focused on important factors that may influence or help explain characteristics of the Missouri and Kansas programs. The purpose of this report is threefold: (1) to provide background information about relevant national, state, and local policies and conditions that affect the Greater Kansas City ECE landscape; (2) to summarize the pertinent descriptive information and provide a synthesis of findings from the two previous landscape reports within sociodemographic and policy contexts; and (3) to identify gaps in the ECE landscape across the metropolitan region.

The report is organized into several sections. The first provides a brief description of ECE programs and important federal funding and policy considerations. The second section addresses the early childhood policy context in Missouri and Kansas, especially the factors that improve quality and access to child care. The third section offers additional important context by providing demographic, economic, and child care profiles for the three counties. In the fourth section, an overview is given of the survey methods used for Phases 1 and 2. The fifth section summarizes the descriptive information found in the two previous landscape survey reports and highlights important findings within policy and sociodemographic contexts. The final section enumerates the gaps found in the ECE landscape of metropolitan Kansas City.

# NATIONAL EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

ECE programs come in various types, each with different strengths and challenges, which affects families' choice of care. Some common program types are described below, including advantages and disadvantages of each type (adapted from Child Care Aware of Minnesota (n.d.)).

Many families choose family, friend, and neighbor care, in which unlicensed caregivers provide care to their own children, related children, or children in the neighborhood. The majority of states require providers to be regulated if they are watching more than four children. The advantages of such care include the low cost, the flexibility of hours, and convenience. On the other hand, these informal providers are not required to meet state health and safety requirements, the group sizes may be larger than is ideal for children, and the caregivers may not have the training and education needed to care for children.

Licensed family child care providers (home-based programs) care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in their homes. State law places a limit on the number of children that can be served in a licensed child care home. Many home-based programs offer scheduled activities so that children of all ages can learn and grow. Families that use home-based programs often cite the warmth and family-like environment found in family child care, including the mixed age groups (with the advantage of keeping siblings together) and flexible hours. Because home-based programs are often staffed by one provider, families must keep in mind the need for backup care in case the provider is sick or goes on vacation. Homes tend to be the least expensive form of licensed care.

Licensed child care centers care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in a facility that serves larger groups of children. State law regulates the number of children who can attend based on the number of staff who work at the center and the age of children present. Children are typically cared for in groups based on age, and specific programs and learning opportunities are typically offered to all children. Because centers have greater numbers of staff available, backup care is rarely needed. One additional advantage of center-based care is that some children thrive in the more structured environment found in most centers. On the other hand, such structured routines may not be a good fit for all children. In addition, some centers have a problem with staff turnover, which can negatively affect a child's sense of security and attachment.

School-based programs are those ECE programs that are offered on behalf of schools and school districts. They typically serve children three years or older. These programs are often called "preschools" or "pre-kindergarten" and are less likely to require parent pay than other forms of care. Depending on the school district, school-based programs may use funding from federal sources, including Head Start, Title I, and Early Childhood Special Education. School-based programs tend to employ teachers with more education (usually at least a bachelor's degree) and training than other types of care. They also tend to be more structured, with a focus on school readiness appreciated by many parents, and, depending on the circumstances, can be more affordable for families with low incomes. On the other hand, school-based programs do not usually serve children younger than three years old, may not be available to all community members, and are less flexible in their schedules.

Not all early care and education programs are created equal, however, and the challenge to federal, state, and local agencies as well as early childhood organizations is to promote the quality standards that allow ECE programs to fulfill their promise.

## QUALITY FACTORS

### Licensing Regulations

One of the regulatory functions government serves with regard to ECE is licensing. Licensing of ECE programs is typically established by laws implemented by state offices that define requirements for the legal operation of ECE programs. The goal of licensing is to ensure children's rights to health, safety, and nutrition while in out-of-home care and to outline a minimum standard of quality below which it is illegal to operate a child care program.

States vary considerably in the methods of regulation. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has noted that while licensing systems can minimize the potential for harmful care, in many states, regulatory systems receive inadequate support to fully protect children's health and development (NAEYC, n.d.). Among the factors typically evaluated to obtain state licensing are child-adult ratios, health and safety practices, and adequacy of the indoor and outdoor physical environment. Research has shown that when child-adult ratios are lower, children are less distressed and less likely to appear apathetic. In addition, in these settings, caregivers spend less time managing their classrooms and offer more stimulating, supportive care. When programs have better health and safety practices, children tend to have fewer respiratory and other infections and become involved in fewer playground injuries (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000; St. Sauver, Khurana, Kao, & Foxman, 1998). The reauthorized Child Care Development and Block Grant (CCDBG), passed in 2014, included provisions not only for child-adult ratios, but also licensing, health and safety, and emergency preparedness. Also, moving into broader quality factors, the 2014 reauthorization of CCDBG established that a portion of the grant be used for quality improvement, including professional development for child care providers and evaluation systems.

## QUALITY INITIATIVES

### Accreditation

While accreditation is used extensively in other fields such as public education and health care, it is comparatively recent in ECE and there are still only a small percentage of programs that seek accreditation. Accreditation means that a program meets standards that go beyond a state's licensing requirements, including quality standards in areas such as teaching strategies, curriculum, assessment of children's learning, health and safety, relationships with families, community involvement, administration, and teacher qualifications. When a program becomes accredited, it has voluntarily decided to meet high quality standards and has made a commitment to provide the kind of care, attention, and stimulating activities that children require. Over the past 15 years, there has been growing interest among ECE programs in pursuing accreditation and thus a proliferation of accreditation systems. Some national organizations that currently provide accreditation to ECE programs are the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NACECEP), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the Council on Accreditation (COA), and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) (National Center of Child Care and Quality Improvement, 2016).

The push for accreditation has been prompted by an increased awareness of the importance of children's early learning experiences and by recent legislative action. Policymakers at state and local levels are using a variety of strategies to promote program accreditation in early childhood programs. One strategy is using accreditation as a way of holding agencies and providers accountable for providing quality care (Stoney, 2004). A second strategy has been for states to allocate child care quality improvement funds to help programs pay for various costs associated with accreditation, such as professional development costs, the purchase of

new equipment, and better compensation for teaching staff. A third strategy has been for states to provide direct support to those programs engaged in the accreditation process. Other states have focused on increasing public awareness of the benefits of program accreditation and increasing private sector involvement in funding child care initiatives as part of a comprehensive plan for building quality. One additional strategy is for states to create differential reimbursement rates, providing higher subsidies to eligible families that use accredited programs rather than non-accredited programs (which Missouri currently does). In general, these various strategies have been used to foster three goals: (1) to increase accessibility of high-quality programs to families with low incomes; (2) to assist programs in maintaining their level of quality; and (3) to serve as an incentive for more programs to become accredited.

## Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

One increasingly prevalent approach to informing consumers about the quality of available ECE programs is the use of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). A QRIS is an approach for measuring different facets of quality against a set of standards and summarizing them into an overall rating of quality (Tout, Starr, Soli, Moodie, Kirby, & Boller, 2010; Tout, Zaslow, Halle, & Forry, 2009). Currently, over 38 states have a statewide QRIS in place and others are conducting pilots or actively exploring implementation of a QRIS (National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, 2010). Measurement of quality can help policymakers diagnose problems, set goals for improvement initiatives, allocate resources toward the most pressing needs, and track change over time. A number of states, as well as federal programs such as Head Start, have used quality measurement for these diagnostic and descriptive purposes and for incentivizing program improvement (Barnard, Smith, Fiene, & Swanson, 2006; South Carolina ECERS Quality Study Team, 2006; Tout & Sherman, 2005; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

While many QRIS different models exist across the states, most of them examine a common set of indicators to assess quality including child-teacher ratios, safety and health, curriculum, environment, interactions, child assessment, staff qualifications/training, accreditation, continuous quality improvement, provisions for children with special needs, cultural and linguistic diversity, family engagement, and community involvement (The Build Initiative and Child Trends, 2016). Most of the state QRIS systems include a standardized classroom observation tool to evaluate these indicators such as the Environment Rating Scales or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.

Most states have some type of program incentives tied to their QRIS. These take the form of financial incentives (i.e., scholarships, training/technical assistance, reimbursement for accreditation or reduced licensing fees) or tiered child care reimbursement rates tied to quality ratings (Barnard, Smith, Fiene, & Swanson, 2006; Frede, Jung, Barnett, Lamy, & Figueras, 2007).

## FUNDING AND ACCESS

### Major Federal Sources of Funding for Early Care and Education

Over the last few decades, the federal government has taken an active role in improving access to high quality ECE by providing assistance to states and providing funds for programs, training, and technical assistance.

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) helps states pay for child care for low-income families. Through this fund, states increase access to ECE by providing funds to families to subsidize their child care costs and also by investing in improving quality through teacher training and grants to child care providers for learning materials. The Child Care and Development Block Grant Fund (CCDBG) is one of the laws that authorizes the CCDF.

Head Start(HS)/Early Head Start(EHS) is the program administered by the federal government that provides educational, social, health, and nutritional services to promote school readiness for children from families with low incomes. Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services has provided additional funds to Head Start to support the EHS Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnerships. This program allows EHS grantees to partner with center- and home-based programs that agree to meet the HS Program Performance Standards. Through these partnerships, EHS programs can leverage their funds to provide more high quality ECE programs in their communities.

The federal government has also invested in comprehensive improvements in state early learning systems. In recent years, the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge has provided funds to states for delivering better coordination across the diverse array of ECE programs, designing clear learning standards for young children, and providing meaningful education and training for early educators. Funds are used to expand ECE across multiple settings, including public and private schools, Head Start centers, community- and faith-based settings, and on college campuses. Preschool Development Grants are another initiative from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to support states in the development and expansion of voluntary preschool programs for four-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families in targeted communities. While 20 states have applied and received these funds to build systems that raise the quality of early learning, Kansas and Missouri have chosen not to apply for funds under these programs or were not successful in their applications. Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides federal funds to states and local communities to help their efforts in providing a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. Part B of IDEA gives states grants for special education and related services for children ages three through five with disabilities. The funding comes from the Office of Special Education Programs in the Department of Education. Part C of IDEA also provides federal funds to states to maintain systems of comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and coordinated interagency programs of early intervention services for infants and toddlers who have developmental disabilities or are at risk for developmental delays.

Title I refers to Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A local education agency (LEA) or school can use Title I funds to operate preschool programs to improve cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children. An LEA can use Title I funds to support a district-wide program that supports all Title I-eligible children across the district, or they can designate specific schools within the district to receive Title I funds. LEAs may designate its Title I funds to operate school-specific Title I preschool programs. A student's eligibility for Title I is based on multiple selection criteria related to factors associated with the student's level of risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards.

### Subsidy/Child Care Assistance

As mentioned earlier, a variety of federal and state options are currently in place for making ECE programs accessible and affordable for families with low incomes. These include the provision of government-funded programs, such as Head Start and Early Head Start and state-run prekindergarten programs, but also the provision of child care subsidies. The demand for subsidized ECE programs exceeds supply in many states. The average cost for full-time care ranges from \$3,700 to \$17,000 per year depending on where a family lives and the age of the child. Child care subsidies provide families with support in covering these high costs for child care (Schulman & Blank, 2016).

States' policies on child care subsidies vary in five key areas: (1) how income eligibility is set to qualify for child care benefits and over time how adjustments are made to account for inflation; (2) whether states have a waiting list for families who qualify for subsidies (last year 20 states had waiting lists and the average number of families on states' waiting lists was over 10,000); (3) whether parents are required to make copayments when they receive subsidies; (4) reimbursement rates for families receiving child care assistance;

and (5) eligibility policies for parents searching for work. A 2016 report from the National Women's Law Center found with respect to these policies more improvements across states than cutbacks in the last year, but the improvements were generally too small to close the gaps families experience in gaining access to child care (Schulman & Blank, 2016).

# STATE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

As mentioned above, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal program that provides child care assistance to families and funds child care quality initiatives through formula block grants to states. CCDBG includes measures to: (1) promote quality child care by increasing state-level investments in activities to improve the quality of care, enhancing states' ability to train providers and develop safer and more effective child care services; (2) strengthen health and safety requirements in ECE programs; and (3) improve access to child care by expanding eligibility for participating families and helping families connect with quality programs that meet their needs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, 2016).

This section describes the state early childhood policy context in Missouri and Kansas and reports on the way state policies affect implementation of CCDBG and other state investments. The specific focus here is on factors that improve the quality of care and those that enhance access to quality child care. These factors may influence or help explain the distribution and quality of early care and education programs observed in the Greater Kansas City area.

## QUALITY FACTORS

### Licensing Regulations

Licensing regulations are established by the state to enforce basic safety and health standards for center- and home-based programs. States also make decisions on which ECE providers must be licensed or regulated.

Table 1 presents a brief overview of licensing regulations in both states to provide a general context for our discussion. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of licensing.

**Table 1**

**Comparison of Missouri and Kansas Child Care Licensing Requirements**

Licensing Requirements	Missouri	Kansas
<b>Licensing Requirements</b>	Any person serving more than four unrelated children at any one time, is required to have a license. See full statute 210.211(5), RSMo	Any person serving more than two children that are unrelated for more than 20 hours a week may be required to have a license. See full statute K.S.A. 65-501
<b>License Exemptions</b>	Child care centers that may be exempt from licensure include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Faith-based programs</li><li>● Schools</li><li>● Preschools that operate no more than four hours per child/per day</li></ul> See full statute 210.201 and 210.211(5), RSMo	Child care centers that may be exempt from licensure include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Programs operated by a local unit of government or school district; which meet for no more than four consecutive hours per day or for no more than two consecutive weeks.</li></ul>

Licensing Requirements	Missouri	Kansas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preschools operated on the premises of private schools providing kindergarten through grade six shall be governed by Kansas statutes applicable to private schools.</li> <li>Military or programs on tribal property.</li> </ul> <p>See full statute K.S.A. 65-501</p>
<b>Ratio and Group Size</b>	Home providers can care for an unlimited number of related children that do not count in the ratio.	Home providers are required to count related children in ratios.
<b>Teacher/Provider Qualifications</b>	<p>18 years old, screened for child abuse and neglect and criminal record.</p> <p>See full statute CSR 30-61.045</p>	<p>One teacher/FCC provider must be in attendance for each unit (K.A.R. 28-4-420) at all times who has a high school diploma or equivalent, as required in K.A.R. 28-4-429(h).</p> <p>A criminal history and child abuse and neglect background check is required for all individuals.</p> <p>See full statute K.S.A. 65-516</p>
<b>Director Qualifications (Based on Licensed Capacity)</b>	<p>Director shall meet the following requirements:</p> <p><b>Licensed Capacity:</b> Up to 20 children</p> <p><b>Education and Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child development associate and Youth Development credential are both options that will meet this requirement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Licensed Capacity:</b> 100 or more children</p> <p><b>Education and Experience:</b></p> <p>One option to meet the requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One hundred twenty (120) college semester hours is one option that will meet this requirement and twenty-four (24) of the one hundred twenty (120) hours must be in child-related courses.</li> </ul> <p>For all options see 19 CSR 30-62.102</p>	<p>Director shall meet the following requirements:</p> <p><b>Licensed Capacity:</b> 13 to 24 children</p> <p><b>Education and Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child development associate is one option that will meet this requirement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Licensed Capacity:</b> 100 or more children</p> <p><b>Education and Experience:</b></p> <p>One option to meet the requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) A degree in child development or early childhood education; or (B) An A.B. or B.S. degree in a related academic discipline and 12 hours of academic study or equivalent training in child</li> </ul>

Licensing Requirements	Missouri	Kansas
		<p>development, early childhood education, curriculum resources, nutrition, child guidance, parent education, supervised practicum, and administration of early childhood programs.</p> <p>For all options see K.A.R. 28-4-429</p>
<b>Ongoing Training Requirement</b>	<p><b>Teacher/Caregiver:</b> 12 approved clock hours of child care-related training during each calendar year.</p> <p><b>Director, homes, volunteers counted in staff/child ratios:</b> same</p> <p>See full statute 19 CSR 30-62.102</p>	<p><b>Teacher:</b> Ten approved clock hours of child care-related training during each calendar year.</p> <p><b>Director:</b> Five clock hours of approved in-service annually provided away from the facility.</p> <p><b>Homes:</b> Five clock hours of approved training, maintain current accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care; or hold a current child development associate credential.</p> <p><b>All:</b> Maintain current certification for First Aid/CPR.</p> <p>See full statute K.A.R. 28-4-428.</p>

Source of data: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Child Care Licensing and Regulations (n.d.) and Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Child Care Licensing (n.d.).

## Kansas Regulations

On May 27, 2010, Governor Parkinson signed into law Senate Substitute HB 2356. The bill is also known as Lexie's Law (Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Lexie's Law, n.d.).

Lexie's Law went into effect on July 1, 2010. Some of the key elements of the bill include:

- The Department of Health and Environment is required to inspect all child care facilities.
- The category of Registered Day Care Homes was eliminated; existing registered homes were required to transition to Licensed Day Care Homes.
- The Department is required through the rules and regulations process to develop requirements for the competent supervision of children and additional health and safety requirements necessary for the protection of children.
- Each new applicant applying for a license to maintain a child care facility must be a high school graduate or have a GED.

## Missouri Regulations

The reauthorization of CCDBG requires that states provide pre-service health and safety training to any provider receiving CCDBG funding. The training must include topics such as first aid and CPR, prevention of sudden infant death syndrome, emergency preparedness, and child abuse prevention. This change will have a large impact on providers in Missouri since current licensed-exempt centers and registered home providers are not required to have documented training to receive state child care subsidies. If the training is not completed by a specified date, registration will be terminated and subsidy payments will end (Missouri Department of Social Services, n.d.).

## QUALITY INITIATIVES

States are required to use a portion of their CCDBG funds for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for, and access to, high quality child care. States have flexibility in determining what activities these funds are used for, but are provided with a list of allowable quality improvement activities.

Key provisions on child care quality in the CCDBG include the following (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families Office of Child Care, 2016).

- States must increase the amount of their CCDBG funds set aside for quality improvement activities, from 4 percent in FY 2015 to 7 percent in FY 2016 and FY 2017; 8 percent in FY 2018 and FY 2019; and 9 percent in FY 2020 and each year thereafter.
- In addition to the overall quality set-aside funds, beginning in FY 2017, states must reserve 3 percent of their CCDBG funds for activities to improve the quality and supply of care for infants and toddlers.
- States must establish a progression of professional development designed to improve the skills and knowledge of the child care workforce and set training requirements that enable providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children.
- States must certify that payment practices for child care providers serving children who receive CCDBG assistance reflect generally accepted payment practices for providers serving children who do not receive such assistance.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) has released copies of the Missouri and Kansas FY 2016-2018 CCDF Plans (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, Approved CCDF Plans, 2016) that became effective June 1, 2016. How the plans are implemented in both states will have an impact on quality and access.

## Accreditation

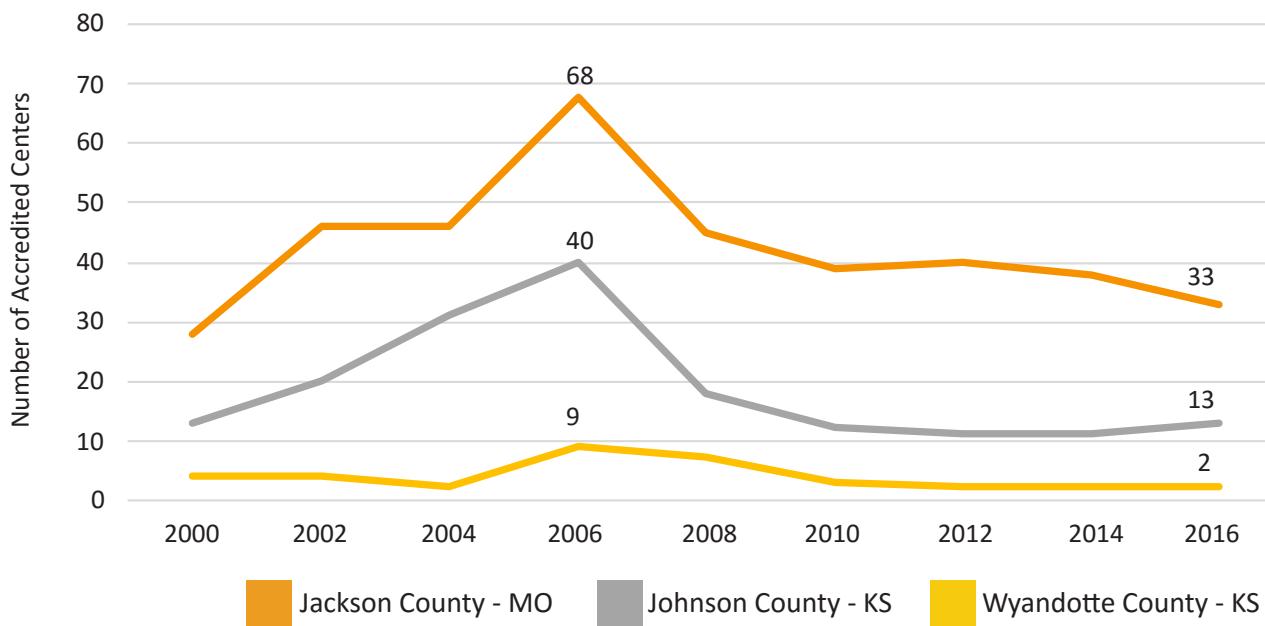
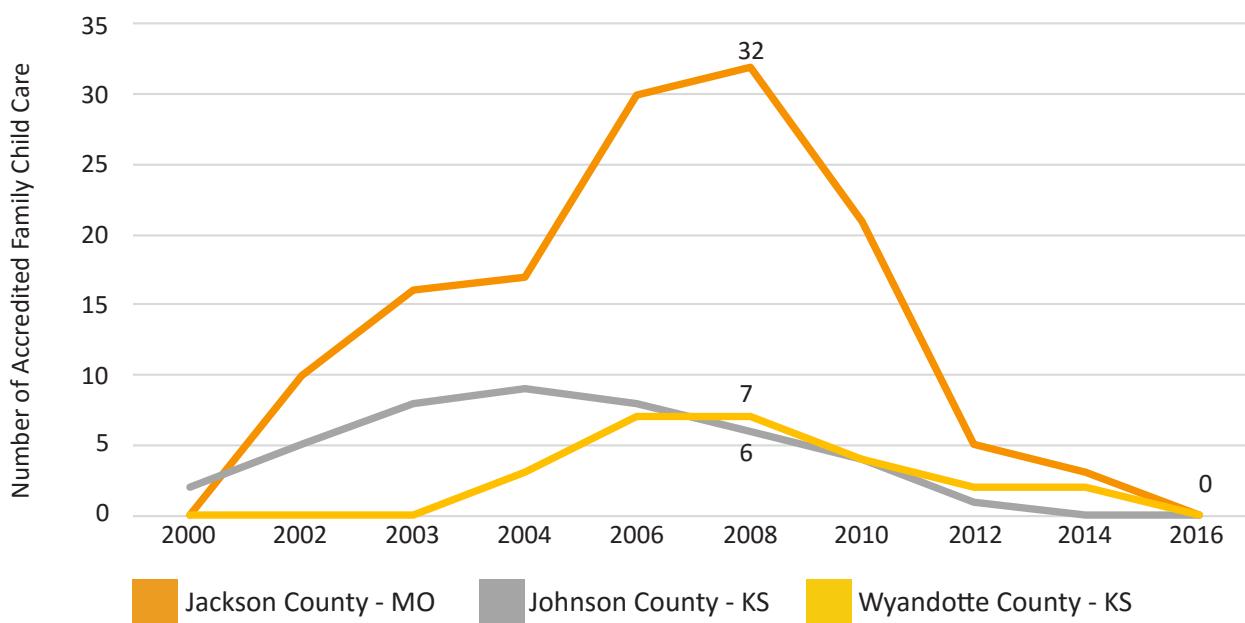
Supporting early care and education programs to achieve national or state accreditation has been a focus of quality initiatives in the Greater Kansas City area for over twenty years. In 1996 only 16 of approximately 600 early care and education programs were nationally accredited. In the ensuing years, the number of centers interested in working toward accreditation increased. At the same time, local and state funders made a commitment to supporting programs in this process by funding accreditation facilitation and quality improvement grants.

In 1996, Heart of America United Way (now United Way of Greater Kansas City) committed to helping child care programs become nationally accredited by NAEYC. In the same year, the Accreditation Facilitation Project was created as a partnership between the United Way, the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning (MCEL), and The Family Conservancy (TFC).

In 1998, the Missouri General Assembly passed House Bill 1519, which created the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund (HB1519). The purpose of the fund was to support early childhood programs in making improvements in quality. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) provided grants for a variety of purposes including purchasing materials, supplies, and equipment, minor renovations, salaries for new staff, professional development experiences, and accreditation fees (Thornburg, Mayfield, Watson, Mathews, & Fuger, 2003).

In 2000, the Greater Kansas City Local Investment Commission (LINC), MCEL, and TFC partnered on a grant to support the Accreditation Facilitation Project. The project secured over \$3.3 million in state-funded investments in quality improvement for ECE programs for the region. At the height of the program in 2006, 117 centers were accredited by NAEYC in Jackson, Johnson, and Wyandotte counties (see Figure 7).

The major Kansas City ECE efforts shifted in the beginning of 2005 from the Accreditation Facilitation Project to the Quality Rating System. It should be noted that state funding for the Accreditation Facilitation Project ended abruptly mid-year in 2012 when the Missouri Legislature trimmed \$10 million in funding for early education programs. As seen in Figures 7 and 8, this shift in focus and funding had a significant impact on the number of nationally accredited ECE programs in the community. The trends demonstrate that accreditation efforts need to be continuously supported in order to sustain a consistently high level of accredited programs.

**Figure 7****Accredited Centers in Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties****Figure 8****Accredited Homes in Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**

The state of Missouri continues to provide incentives for early care and education programs to achieve accreditation status through a 20% enhanced child care subsidy rate. The Missouri Preschool Program requires programs to work on accreditation and to achieve accreditation by year four of the grant. In the Greater Kansas City area, the United Way of Greater Kansas City continues to require the ECE programs it funds to meet one of four quality improvement areas, which includes accreditation.

There are no accreditation incentives in the state of Kansas at this time. The incentives in Missouri may help explain the differences in the number of accredited programs in Jackson County compared to Johnson and Wyandotte counties.

## Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

In 2004, Kansas City piloted a Quality Rating System (QRS) that influenced the creation of state rating systems in Missouri and Kansas.

### Missouri

In 2008, the Missouri Quality Rating System was launched. In 2012, the Missouri Legislature passed an amendment to House Bill 1731 that banned implementation of QRIS for early learning programs using state funding (Missouri House of Representatives, n.d.). In the aftermath, Missouri stood out as the only state in the nation to enact a ban on the increasingly common quality standards, which are required by states seeking certain federal grants.

In June 2016, Governor Nixon signed into law Senate Bill 638, which lifted the ban and created a time-limited, voluntary pilot program that is open to licensed and license-exempt centers and homes. During the next three years, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office and the Departments of Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, and Social Services, will establish an early learning quality assurance report that reflects evidence-based practices. Work on the pilot is anticipated to begin once requested funding is allocated in 2017 (Missouri Senate, n.d.).

### Kansas

In 2005, Kansas implemented the Kansas Quality Rating and Improvement System (KQRIS). Johnson and Wyandotte counties began participating in the state model in 2008 once the local pilot ended. This statewide project began with 38 classrooms and grew to 505 classrooms by 2012. Kansas QRIS was widely funded across the state until the state stopped funding Kansas Smart Start at the end of 2012.

The state is using the CCDBG reauthorization as an opportunity to develop a statewide QRIS. A pilot program with 30 to 40 centers and homes will launch in early 2017.

## Kansas Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF)

The Kansas Legislature created the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) in 1999 with funding from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, from which Kansas has received over \$50 million in annual payments. The Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund was established as an endowment for the funds with specified annual transfers to be made from the KEY Fund to the CIF. To advise the Governor and Legislature on the use of CIF, the Legislature established the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (the Children's Cabinet; n.d.).

The Children's Cabinet administers the Kansas Early Childhood Block Grant with grants to school districts, child care centers and homes, Head Start sites, and community agencies. Programs are funded to provide research-based child development services with a focus on at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschool for three- and four-year-olds in underserved areas (Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, Children's Initiatives Fund, n.d.).

Through this fund, the Unified School District #500 in Wyandotte County was awarded \$1,162,797 in 2016 for Project SPARK, Successful Partnerships to Assure Readiness for Kindergarten. The school district partners with United Way of Wyandotte County and The Family Conservancy to provide support services to community ECE providers, preschool classrooms, and infant/toddler home visits.

After repeated sweeps of the KEY Fund, the endowment is nearly empty, leaving the ECE system in Kansas at risk. With Kansas budget shortfalls, children's advocates are fighting to keep the fund in place in spite of pressure to dismantle the current structure and eliminate the CIF, moving those dollars into the State General Fund. Until the state resolves the budget crisis, investments in young children remain at risk.

## Local Quality Initiatives

Locally, The Partners in Quality for Early Childhood Education (PIQ) is the key community collaboration body for early learning in the Greater Kansas City region. Through PIQ, community partners are able to share up-to-date quality supports that are available to providers in Greater Kansas City. Examples of some local quality initiatives include:

- The CLASS Institute (teachers learn how to use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to help improve the quality of their interactions with children)
- Health and wellness projects (including nutrition, physical activity, and community gardening)
- Child assessment support (teachers learn how to use Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP))
- Training on a variety of topics for early childhood educators, all based on the *Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals (Kansas and Missouri)*.

In 2015, the PIQ Quality Enhancement Technical Workgroup developed an inventory of programs and initiatives that support quality early learning in the region and are aligned with objectives and strategies outlined in the PIQ Strategic Plan. The workgroup also developed a quality improvement framework that identified key components of the region's quality improvement infrastructure which support quality ECE programs. From this work, an informational piece has been developed as a tool to educate the public and policymakers about the importance of quality early learning supports and their relation to better child outcomes (Mid-America Regional Council, n.d.).

## FUNDING FACTORS AND ACCESS

In addition to focusing on improving the quality of their program and meeting state licensing standards, ECE providers need to consider revenues and expenses of their program. At the same time, parents are struggling to afford child care that can exceed the cost of college tuition. There are multiple sources of child care funding throughout the country, but these sources often serve only a fraction of the population and are not part of a coordinated system to make affordable, quality child care accessible to all working parents, especially families with low incomes.

## Subsidy/Child Care Assistance

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides federal money to states to subsidize the cost of child care for lower-income families and to improve the quality of child care. The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) outlines requirements for the CCDF program and allows subsidies to be provided to children who are under age thirteen and older children under age nineteen who have special needs, with parents or guardians who are working or attending a job training or educational program, and with family incomes up to 85 percent of the applicable state median income. Within the broad federal parameters, states set the detailed program policies. While CCDF is a single program from the perspective of federal law, in practice it is a different program in every state.

In Table 2, an overview of subsidy policies in both states is presented to provide a general context for the discussion. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of family eligibility policies.

**Table 2**

**Comparison of Missouri and Kansas State Subsidy Policies for Family Eligibility**

	Missouri	Kansas
<b>Family Eligibility Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The applying child must be a US citizen, and verification is only required if questionable.</li> <li>● Parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are working;</li> <li>○ Attend school;</li> <li>○ Are in job training;</li> <li>○ Are disabled;</li> <li>○ Are being evaluated for training and/or employment;</li> <li>○ Have a child with special needs and/or;</li> <li>○ Are receiving child welfare services from the Department of Social Services, Children's Division.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The applying child must be a US citizen, documentation is required.</li> <li>● Parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Receiving TANF cash assistance;</li> <li>○ Working 28 hours per week;</li> <li>○ In school and working 15 hours per week; and/or</li> <li>○ Who are teens working toward a GED.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Income Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gross income amount below 138% of Federal Poverty Level (e.g., family of 4 maximum monthly income \$2,795).</li> <li>● Submission of the application listing all members within the household, employment/training status, income amounts, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gross income amount below 185% of Federal Poverty Level (e.g., family of 4 maximum monthly income \$3,746 month).</li> <li>● Consider the monthly income for each family member.</li> </ul>
<b>Payment System</b>	Child care providers receive payment directly from Department of Social Services for payment of the state rate, less any sliding scale fee.	Child care assistance is issued to families using the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Kansas Benefits card. eFunds Corporation is the EBT contractor in Kansas. Providers must enroll with eFunds Corp. in order to get payment.
<b>Family Copay</b>	Sliding scale based on income (e.g., family of 4, maximum monthly income \$2,795, copay \$5/day per child).	A family's copay is the difference between the provider's public rate and the subsidy rate the parent receives from the state.

Source of data: Missouri Department of Social Services, Child Care Subsidy Program (n.d.) and Kansas Department of Children and Families, Economic & Employment Services, Child Care Subsidy (n.d.).

## Child Care Subsidy Rates

Federal guidance for the Child Care and Development Block grant (CCDBG) recommends that states set their child care subsidy rates no lower than the 75th percentile of market rate, or high enough to access 75 percent of providers in the market. States are not required to set their payment rates to subsidize providers based on the 75th percentile of the market rate. CCDBG requires states to conduct a market rate survey of the prices child care providers charge for care every two years. The challenge is market rate surveys only capture what providers have been able to charge private-pay parents.

In Missouri and Kansas, base payment rates to child care programs are set based on the following factors: (1) geographic location (by county); (2) age of child; and (3) type of care. For Kansas, rates are based on information from the 2014 market analysis. Kansas providers are paid at approximately the 40th percentile (ranges from 15th to 55th percentile). This means that 40% of providers charge the private sector the state rate. For Missouri, rates are set by the Legislature based on appropriations. A market rate survey is conducted every two years to obtain information on the market rates. Rates for Licensed and Religious in Compliance child care providers increased 3% in July 2013, 3% in July 2015, and 10% in July 2016. In Missouri, providers are paid at approximately the 45th percentile (ranges from 38th to 49th percentile) (Missouri Department of Social Services, Child Care Subsidy Program and Kansas Department of Children and Families, Economic & Employment Services, Child Care Subsidy, n.d.).

**Table 3**

**Child Care Subsidy Base Rate by County**

Age of Child	Jackson County	Johnson County	Wyandotte County
<b>Infant (6 months), full-time licensed center care</b>	\$31.78 per 5-10 hours	\$5.06 per hour	\$3.56 per hour
<b>Infant (6 months), full-time licensed home care</b>	\$19.87 per 5-10 hours	\$3.27 per hour	\$2.50 per hour
<b>Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed center care</b>	\$31.78 per 5-10 hours	\$4.13 per hour	\$3.08 per hour
<b>Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed home care</b>	\$19.87 per 5-10 hours	\$2.98 per hour	\$2.21 per hour
<b>Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed center care</b>	\$18.38 per 5-10 hours	\$3.68 per hour	\$2.70 per hour
<b>Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed home care</b>	\$14.71 per 5-10 hours	\$2.98 per hour	\$2.21 per hour

Source of data: Missouri Department of Social Services, Child Care Subsidy Program (n.d) and Kansas Department of Children and Families, Economic & Employment Services, Child Care Subsidy (n.d.).

As shown in Table 3, the subsidy rates differ between the three counties. For example, a licensed center that is caring for an infant on child care subsidy for eight hours would receive \$31.78 in Jackson County, \$40.48 in Johnson County, and \$28.48 in Wyandotte County.

States can choose to establish tiered rates or add-ons on top of these variable base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children).

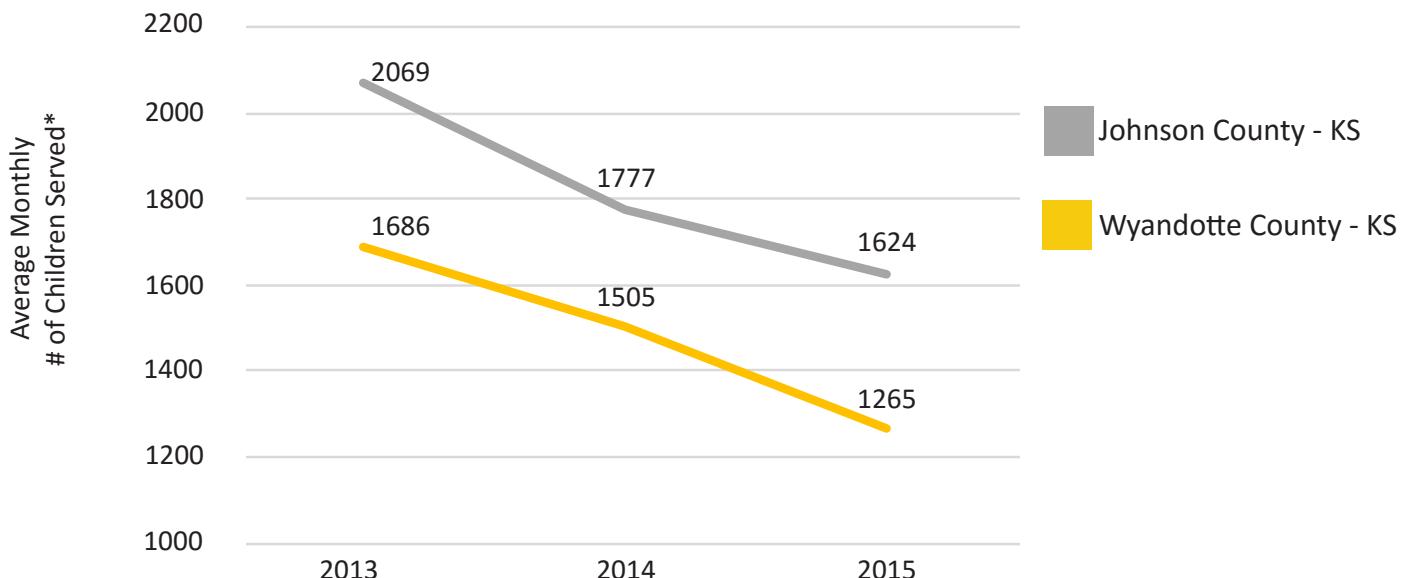
In Missouri, ECE providers may also receive increases called *rate differentials* in addition to the daily base rates (Missouri Department of Social Services, Child Care Subsidy Program, n.d.). Types of rate differentials are the following and are determined based on appropriations:

- 25% increase for caring for a child with a special need. Protected Service children are considered special needs.
- 20% increase for accreditation by a state-recognized organization.
- 30% increase for licensed providers when 50% of the children they care for are from DSS-subsidized families. This rate differential is called Disproportionate Share. Note: Since 2003 no additional providers have been added due to lack of funding. However, providers that were eligible at the time were grandfathered in and several programs still receive this differential.
- For Fiscal Year 2017, the Department of Social Services (DSS) received additional funding for Disproportionate Share 2 (DS2). Effective September 1, 2016, DSS can pay a 30% rate differential over the maximum base rate to a licensed child care provider or a religious-in-compliance license-exempt provider that provides care to a disproportionate share (50% or more) of children receiving child care subsidy and are accredited or working towards accreditation with one of the DSS-recognized accrediting organizations. The funding is limited and providers have to apply to receive DS2.

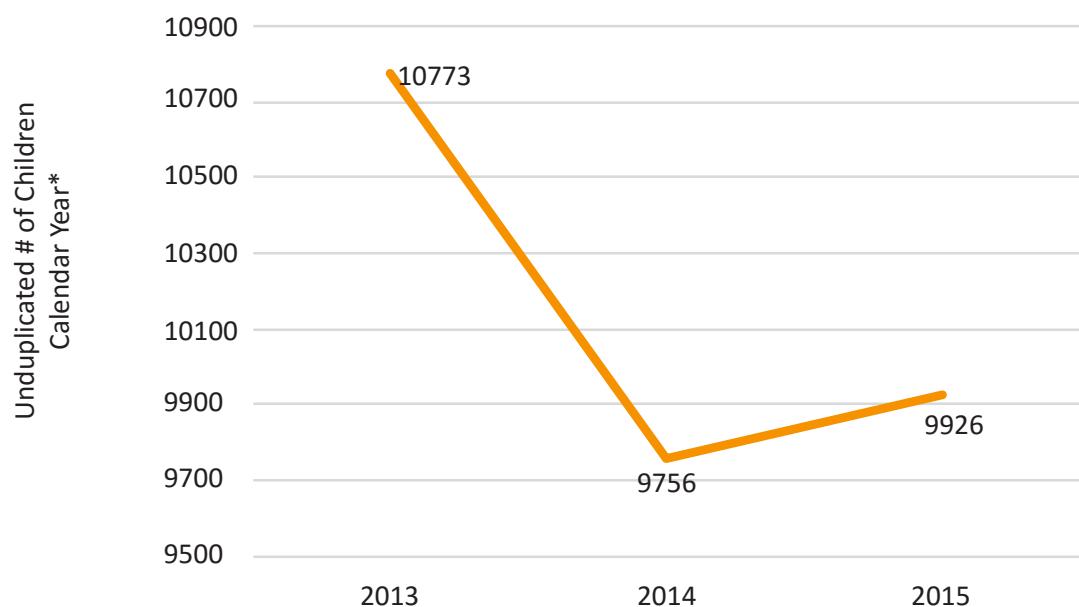
In Kansas, ECE providers receive an enhanced benefit rate to purchase child care for a child with a physical, mental, or emotional disability if that child requires care above and beyond typical care for a child of that age. Providers may be eligible for reimbursement up to, but not exceeding, the Enhanced Rate for Special Care of \$6.00 per hour for all ages of children (Kansas Department of Children and Families, Economic & Employment Services, Child Care Subsidy, n.d.).

**Figure 9**

### Child Care Subsidy Usage in Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



\*Average Monthly number of children served by Child Care Subsidy. There has been a 22% decrease in the average monthly number of children served in Johnson and a 25% decrease in Wyandotte from 2013- 2015. Source of data: Kids Count Data Center, (n.d.).

**Figure 10****Child Care Subsidy Usage in Jackson County**

\*Unduplicated children receiving child care subsidy by calendar year in Jackson County. There has been a 8% decrease in the number of children served from 2013- 2015. Source of data: Missouri Department of Social Services, Child Care Subsidy Program (n.d.).

Figures 9 and 10 show child care subsidy usage from 2013 to 2015 for the three counties. The number of children receiving subsidy has decreased since 2013 in all three counties. One possible explanation for these usage trends is that, in both states, prior to the new CCDBG federal law, many families received subsidies for only a short period and frequently cycled on and off the program. Provider subsidy payment rates and other policies and practices were also insufficient to allow low-income families to afford high quality care. Without a dependable source of support for child care, many families have difficulty maintaining their children in the same child care arrangement over time. This can be problematic since children need consistency and stability to form attachments with caregivers, which are critical for their social-emotional development. The CCDBG final rule lengthens eligibility periods so families have more stable subsidies while also supporting continuity of care and relationships between children and their providers.

Kansas implemented several policies that reduced families' access to child care assistance (Kansas Action for Children).

- Parents must meet strict work requirements (28 hours or more a week) to maintain eligibility. The statute mandates at least 20 hours per week, but rules and regulations set the bar higher.
- Parents who are pursuing higher education must work at least 15 hours per week in addition to attending school, and have a lifetime limit of 24 months that they can be students and maintain eligibility.
- Sanctions for "noncooperation," meaning families who fail to follow all DCF directions/requirements, include losing Child Care Assistance eligibility for progressively longer periods of time.
- Because state child care reimbursements have remained stagnant, many families may find that child care assistance doesn't cover the cost of child care and forgo the hassle of applying and maintaining eligibility altogether.

## State-Funded Early Head Start

### Missouri

In 1998, the Missouri Legislature set aside a portion of gaming revenue to create a fund for ECE programs. The Missouri Department of Social Services then made an administrative decision to use these funds to expand Early Head Start (EHS) services. The EHS program provides an early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development program to children under the age of three whose families' incomes are at or below the federal poverty line. Funding allows for 10 EHS programs in 37 counties. Mid-America Head Start contracts for EHS services in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties (Missouri Department of Social Services, Early Head Start, n.d.).

### Kansas

In 1998, the Kansas Legislature approved funding to provide a state-administered Early Head Start initiative. Kansas was the first state in the nation to fund Early Head Start modeled after the federal program. The intent of the Kansas Early Head Start (KEHS) program is to provide grants to local Head Start programs to serve pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers who meet the federal poverty guidelines. All KEHS programs follow Head Start Performance Standards. Funding allows for 15 KEHS programs in 48 counties with 1,177 enrollment slots. Two Head Start programs, one in Johnson and one in Wyandotte, participate in the state EHS program (Kansas Department of Children and Families, Economic & Employment Services, Head Start and Early Head Start, n.d.).

## State-Funded Pre-K Programs

### Missouri

Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) began in 1998 serving three- and four year-olds in early childhood settings. MPP is operated in public schools, community-based child-care centers, and nonprofit agencies. In 2014-2015, MPP was offered in 30% of school districts in the state, and 95% of MPP children were enrolled in programs that were operated by a public school. In Jackson County, four of the twelve school districts (Blue Springs, Hickman Mills, Independence, and Kansas City Public Schools) currently participate in MPP (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Preschool Program, n.d.).

### Kansas

There are two state-funded pre-K programs supported by Kansas. The first program is the Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten Program, established in 1998, and formerly known as the Four-Year-Old At-Risk Program. The second program is the Kansas Preschool Program, formerly known as the Pre-K Pilot Program, which was first offered in the 2006-2007 program year and is funded with tobacco dollars from the Master Settlement Agreement.

The Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten Program provides funding to public schools directly, although schools may subcontract with community-based organizations to provide services. School districts receive 50% of the Base Student Aid per pupil, per the state's K-12 funding formula. Eligibility for the program requires that children must meet, at minimum, one of the eight risk factors: eligibility for free lunch (130% FPL), academic or developmental delay based upon validated assessments, English Language Learner status, migrant status, a parent lacking a high school diploma or GED, having a single parent, having a teen parent, or having a

referral from the Department for Children and Families. Nine out of the 10 school districts in Johnson/Wyandotte Counties participate, for a total of 1,029 state funded slots (Kansas State Department of Education, State Pre-Kindergarten Program, n.d.).

The Kansas Preschool Program (KPP) is operated by the Kansas State Department of Education and is presently available in 14 out of 105 counties. In Wyandotte and Johnson Counties, two of the ten school districts surveyed (Kansas City Kansas School District and Shawnee Mission School District) participate in the Kansas Preschool Program. Grants are awarded to school districts and nonprofit community partnerships or community agencies on behalf of a coalition of service providers. At least 50% of the children enrolled must meet either one of the program risk factors for the Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten Program or one of the alternate risk factors: referral by an early childhood organization, qualifying for reduced price lunch (185% FPL), or having a parent on active military duty. The other half must be eligible according to standards set by local programs (Kansas State Department of Education, Kansas Preschool Program, n.d.).

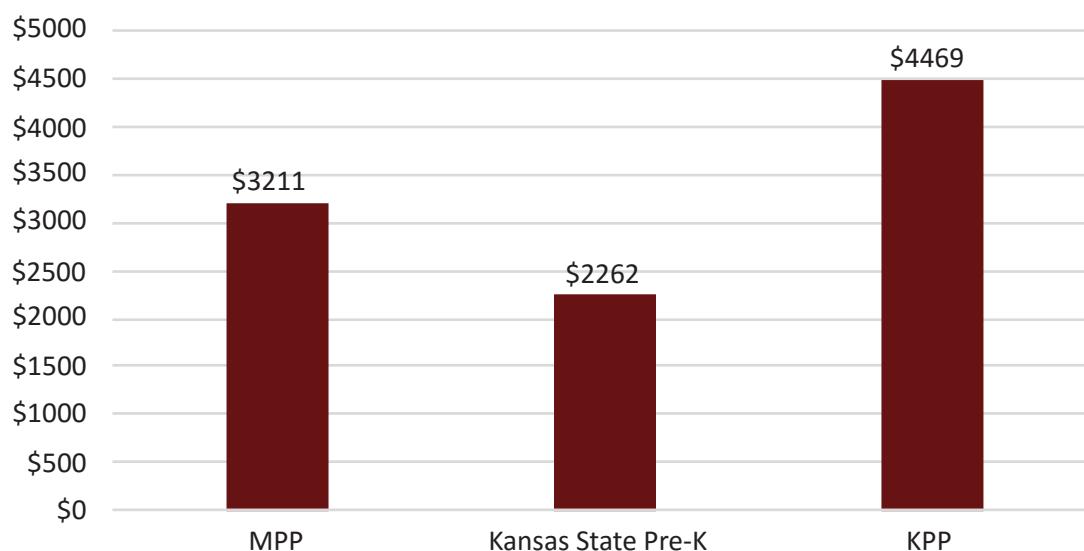
Table 4 compares the standards required for MPP and KPP programs. MPP programs must be accredited, whereas KPP program do not have to be. In addition, MPP programs specify longer hours of programming than KPP programs (6.5 hours daily vs. 3 hours). As shown in Figure 11, per child spending is higher for KPP than MPP programs.

Comparison of State Pre-K Program Standards		
State Pre-K Requirements	Missouri (MPP)	Kansas (KPP)
<b>Teacher Degree</b>	BA	BA
<b>Assistant Teacher Degree</b>	CDA or equivalent	CDA or equivalent
<b>Licensing</b>	Must be licensed by the state	Must be licensed by the state
<b>Accreditation</b>	Must be accredited by NAEYC or MoA	No requirement on accreditation
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	20	20
<b>Staff-Child Ratio</b>	1:10	1:10
<b>Hours of Programming</b>	6.5 hours daily 5 days a week School year	3 hours daily 5 days a week
<b>Curriculum</b>	One of the curriculum models approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Curriculum that is research-based and aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards
<b>Assessment</b>	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours (KELI-4)

Source of data: Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) 2016-2017 Administrative Manual (n.d) and Kansas Preschool Program: Program Standards (2016).

**Figure 11**

**State Pre-K Spending per Child**



Source of data: Barnett et al., 2016

# DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROFILES

This section presents profiles of the two areas (Jackson County, Johnson/Wyandotte Counties) addressed by Phases 1 and 2, as well as the three counties that compose the areas, with respect to demographics, economic indicators, and ECE characteristics.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 5 shows demographic characteristics for the three counties and the two areas. The combined Johnson/Wyandotte area has slightly more residents than Jackson County. The racial/ethnic profiles differ among the three counties. For Jackson County, nearly two-thirds are White, about one-quarter are Black/African American, and less than a tenth are Hispanic/Latino. In Wyandotte County, over a quarter of the population is Hispanic/Latino, with less than half White and less than a quarter Black/African American. Johnson County is predominately White. Compared to Jackson County, the Johnson/Wyandotte area has a greater percentage of Whites and a lower percentage of minority residents.

Table 5		Demographic Characteristics for the Counties and Areas			
		Jackson County, MO	Johnson County, KS	Wyandotte County, KS	Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, KS, combined
<b>Total Population</b>		<b>687,623</b>	<b>580,159</b>	<b>163,369</b>	<b>743,528</b>
White		62.5%	80.5%	42.1%	72.1%
Black/African American		23.6%	4.5%	22.8%	8.6%
Hispanic/Latino		8.9%	7.4%	27.7%	11.9%
Asian and Pacific Islander		2.0%	4.8%	4.0%	4.6%
American Indian/ Native American		0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Some other race alone or in combination		2.6%	2.5%	3.1%	2.7%
Percent of total population that speaks only English*		91.1%	88.9%	75.1%	85.9%
<b>Total child population under 6</b>		<b>52,099</b>	<b>46,014</b>	<b>15,180</b>	<b>61,194</b>
Child population under 6 as a % of total population		7.6%	7.9%	9.3%	8.2%
% of children under 6 in single-parent families		41.5%	16.3%	40.2%	22.0%

Note. All figures in the table are 2015 American Community Survey estimates unless otherwise specified. \*2010-2014 ACS estimate

The extent to which residents speak only English is shown in Table 5. Nearly a quarter of Wyandotte residents speak another language besides English, compared to 11% percent of Johnson and 9% of Jackson residents. The predominant other language in all three counties is Spanish.

The number of young children under six years old is slightly greater in the Johnson/Wyandotte area compared to Jackson County. Although the percent of children under six years old between the areas is similar, Wyandotte had a slightly higher percentage than the other two counties. With respect to family structure, more than two out of five children under six years old in Jackson and Wyandotte counties live in single-parent families; in Johnson County, only one out of six children of that age group do.

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Table 6 shows economic indicators for the two areas and three counties. Clearly, Johnson County is the wealthiest by all the economic indicators, and the Johnson/Wyandotte area is better off on all indicators than Jackson County. Wyandotte County fares worse on all the economic measures than Jackson County.

The difference between the richest and poorest counties is stark. In Johnson County, the median household income is twice that of Wyandotte County, due in part to the lower percentage of single-parent homes in Johnson and higher proportion of adults with a bachelor's degree. Only about one in twelve children under six live in poverty in Johnson County, whereas more than one in three do in Wyandotte. Even though Johnson County's total population is more than three and half times the size of Wyandotte's, the actual count of children under six in poverty is greater in Wyandotte than Johnson. On the indicator of neighborhood poverty density—children under six years old living in high poverty areas, defined as areas where at least 30% of residents are in poverty—the county differences are most pronounced. More than two out of five children under six in Wyandotte live in high poverty areas, compared to roughly one in four in Jackson, and less than one in a hundred in Johnson County.

**Table 6**

**Economic Indicators for the Counties and Areas**

	Jackson County, MO	Johnson County, KS	Wyandotte County, KS	Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, KS, combined
<b>Median household income</b>	\$48,212	\$82,892	\$41,800	\$74,240
<b>% of total population in poverty</b>	17.8%	5.3%	21.8%	8.9%
<b>% of children under 6 in poverty</b>	30.2%	8.1%	34.3%	14.7%
<b>% of children under 6 living in high poverty areas*</b>	27.7%	0.7%	40.7%	11.7%
<b>% of adults 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher</b>	30.2%	55.4%	16.0%	47.2%

Note. High poverty areas are defined as census tracts with 30% or more residents in poverty. All figures are 2015 ACS estimates unless otherwise specified.

\*2010-2014 ACS estimates

## ECE CHARACTERISTICS

The need for child care, its availability, and cost for the three counties are described below.

### Need for Child Care

One way to estimate the need for child care is to examine the number of children under six years old with all parents in the labor force. Given that children are usually older than five when they enter kindergarten, we have chosen to use the under six figures as a generous estimate for the number of children potentially needing child care. Table 7 shows these numbers for all three counties and two areas. Across all three counties, the total estimated number of children under six with all parents working is about 80,000.

Table 7	Number of Children Under Six Years Old with All Parents in Labor Force			
	Jackson County, MO	Johnson County, KS	Wyandotte County, KS	Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, KS, combined
<b>Children under 6 with all parents in the labor force (ACS 2015 estimate)</b>	37,341	33,410	9,356	42,766

### Availability of ECE Programs

As discussed in the State Early Care and Education Policy Context section, Missouri and Kansas differ with respect to regulation of programs offering child care. In both states, school-based programs are exempt from licensure. Most center-based and home-based programs in Kansas are licensed. In Missouri, the proportion of licensed-exempt and non-regulated programs is higher than in Kansas. As shown in Table 8, the percentage of licensed programs by type of care differs between Missouri and Kansas counties. Johnson and Wyandotte have the same distribution by type of care, in which licensed homes make up the bulk of ECE programs (although they serve fewer children than in centers). On the other hand, Jackson has more licensed centers than licensed homes, with most children served in center-based care. Most of the home-based programs in Jackson County are unregulated, with only about 20% licensed. In Missouri, the number of known unregulated programs (known because they register to receive child care subsidy) has increased 26% since 2013 (Child Care Aware of Missouri, 2016).

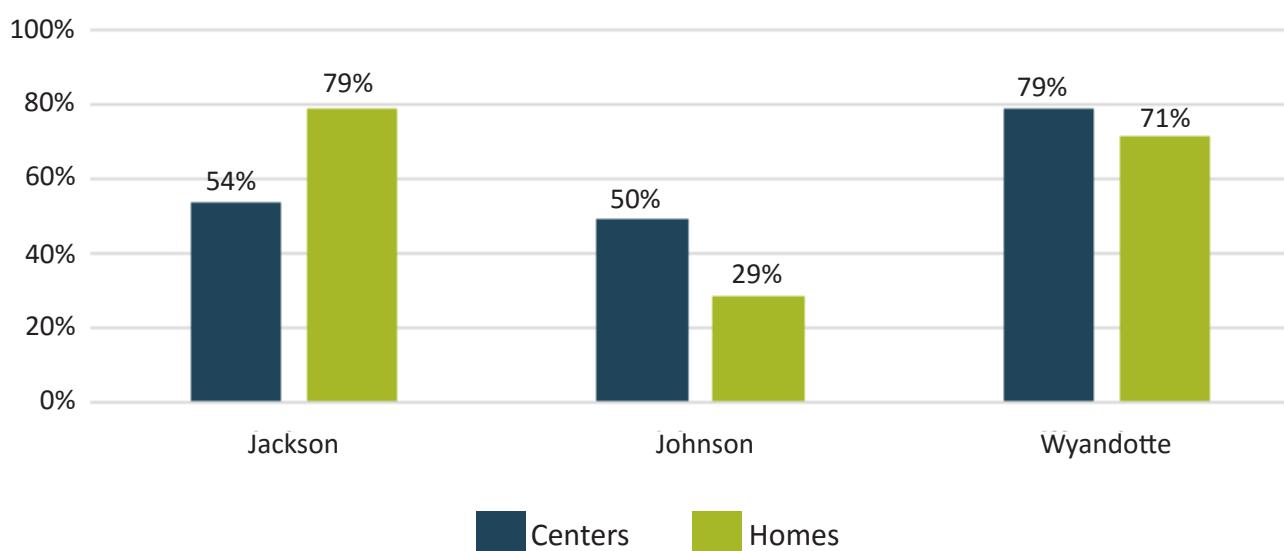
Table 8 also shows capacity data for licensed programs, as well as licensed-exempt centers in Missouri. Because school-based programs are exempt from licensure in Kansas and Missouri, they are not reflected in this table. Based on these data, across the three counties, licensed centers served 82% of children and licensed homes 18%.

The capacity numbers shown only address licensed capacity, which includes school-age children along with children not yet in kindergarten, because the state departments do not disaggregate licensed capacity by age group served. Clearly, the need for child care exceeds the licensed capacity available for all three counties. For Jackson, the licensed child care supply, including school-age care, was about 26,000 slots. The number of children who potentially need child care, based on Table 7, is about 37,000. Similarly, in Johnson and Wyandotte counties, the licensed capacity numbers (about 26,000 and 4,000, respectively) are smaller than the potential need for care (33,000 and 9,000 children, respectively).

**Table 8****Facilities by County and Type of Care, 2016**

Type of care	Jackson County, MO			Johnson County, KS			Wyandotte County, KS		
	Number	Percent	Capacity	Number	Percent	Capacity	Number	Percent	Capacity
Licensed centers	241	57%	24,432	181	20%	18,471	38	22%	2,477
Licensed preschools	0	0%	0	8	1%	192	2	1%	33
Licensed homes	128	43%	1,206	698	79%	7,344	133	77%	1,456
Licensed total	325	0	25,638	887	0	26,007	173	0	3,966
License-exempt centers	59	0	4,666						

Note. Centers includes group homes. Sources of data were Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (Regulated Child Care Provider Listing) and Child Care Aware of Kansas.

**Figure 12 Percent of Licensed Centers and Homes that Accept Child Care Subsidy**

Sources: Child Care Aware of Missouri and Child Care Aware of Kansas.

As shown in Figure 12, the counties differ with respect to the proportion of programs that take state child care subsidy. The majority of licensed centers and homes in Jackson and Wyandotte Counties accept child care subsidy from the state. On the other hand, the proportion of programs accepting state subsidy in Johnson County is lower than the other counties, especially with respect to home-based programs. Families who rely on child care assistance in Johnson County potentially have fewer options for care than those in Jackson and Wyandotte Counties.

## Cost of Child Care

Table 9 shows the average cost of full-time child care per week for each county by age group. The averages for Jackson County are from 2013, whereas the figures for Johnson and Wyandotte are from 2016. It should be noted that the Jackson data include both licensed (regulated) as well as license-exempt and unregulated programs, which has the effect of driving down the average cost of care given that license-exempt/unregulated programs are typically less expensive than licensed care. In general, the younger the child, the more expensive the care because adult-to-child ratios are higher for younger children.

Based on the figures in Table 9, Jackson families spend an average of about \$9,000 a year for full-time infant (0-12 month) care, whereas Wyandotte families spend about \$10,300 and Johnson families nearly \$15,300. For full-time preschool-age care, the annual average for Jackson was about \$6,300, about \$7,200 for Wyandotte, and \$11,700 for Johnson County. For families with lower incomes, these can be daunting numbers for a family budget.

**Table 9 Full-Time Mean Weekly Child Care Costs by Age Group, County, and Type of Care**

Age	Jackson County, MO		Johnson County, KS		Wyandotte County, KS	
	Centers	Homes	Centers	Homes	Centers	Homes
Infant (0-12 mos.)	\$173	\$120	\$294	\$186	\$198	\$150
Toddler (13-24 mos.)	\$169	\$114	\$253	\$178	\$165	\$144
Toddler (25-36 mos.)	\$135	\$106	\$225	\$176	\$157	\$130
Preschool (3-5 years)	\$121	\$98	\$225	\$169	\$138	\$122

Note. For Jackson County, license-exempt and registered programs are included. Source for Jackson County costs is Child Care Aware of Missouri (November, 2013); for Johnson and Wyandotte, it is Child Care Aware of Kansas (October, 2016).

# METHOD

## OVERVIEW

This project brought together three of the most experienced and longest-running organizations engaged in ECE services and research in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The lead agency, The Family Conservancy (TFC), is a provider of mental health, parent education, and other services to early learning programs. The Juniper Gardens Children's Project (JGCP), collaborating subcontractor, is a University of Kansas organization with a 50-year history of improving the academic and social well-being of area children, youth, and families through research and development of evidence-based practices for use by parents, caregivers, and teachers. The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA), established in 1978, is an applied social science research center at the University of Missouri that specializes in decision-support and policy-development research.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were addressed by the landscape surveys across both Phases.

1. What are children's demographic characteristics?
2. What are the programs' characteristics?
3. What are program staff characteristics?

## POPULATION OF PROVIDERS AND PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED AND ENROLLED

To address the research questions, ECE programs were surveyed in Jackson County, MO (Phase 1), and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, KS (Phase 2). The following types of programs were recruited:

- **School-based programs** were school district Pre-K programs located in school district facilities, which are exempt for licensure.
- **Center-based programs** were licensed child care centers able to serve more than 20 children. Also included here were licensed group home programs who are able to serve 11-20 children who are not relatives of the provider that may be located in the operator's residence.
- **Home-based programs** were licensed homes operated by an individual in her/his residence, caring for up to 10 children who are not relatives of the operator.

In Jackson County, all school-, center-, and home-based programs meeting the characteristics mentioned above were recruited. In Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, all school- and center-based programs were recruited. However, because of the large number of homes, a random geographically stratified sample (using ZIP codes) of approximately 18% of home-based providers in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties were recruited. Eighteen percent was used to generate a sample equal in size to that surveyed in Jackson County. If a home-based program was not interested in completing a survey, the next program randomly listed for that ZIP code was recruited.

Across both phases a total of 414 programs were surveyed: 25 school-based, 248 center-based, and 141 home-based programs. The programs employed over 5,500 staff and served about 26,000 children. The Phase 1 surveys were conducted in spring/summer of 2015, and the Phase 2 surveys in spring/summer of 2016.

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Topic Domains and Item Development.** Three survey instruments were developed by the project team and approved by a member of the Early Education Funders Collaborative. For Phase 2, some minor changes were made to the surveys, primarily to account for differences between Kansas and Missouri licensing regulations. As requested and approved by the Collaborative, survey questions were developed around the following domains:

- **Teachers** (e.g., education level, age/gender/race of staff members, salary rates and benefits)
- **Children** (e.g., ages/race/ethnicity of children served, percent who speak a second language at home, number on the Child & Adult Care Food Program)
- **Programs** (e.g., area/neighborhood served, characteristics of sites [playground, library, etc.], curriculum used, and funding sources)
- **Measurable outcomes** (e.g., student assessments used)
- **Connection to K-3** (e.g., schools children attend after graduation)
- **Financials** (e.g., sources of income, primary expenditures)
- **Family engagement** (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, parent education events)

**Survey Pilot Testing.** The surveys were pilot tested by a small group of home providers, teachers, and an assistant principal. Respondents were asked to comment on clarity, understanding, and whether items applied to the intended programs.

## SURVEY PROCEDURES

A set of common procedures was used to optimize the return rate of the surveys for both phases.

**Announcement Card.** An announcement card was mailed to each program using the available contact information. Emails and follow-up phone calls were completed as needed to confirm contact with the program.

**Website.** To help with recruitment, data collection, and return rate, a website was developed to support the project ([www.kcpreklandscape.ku.edu](http://www.kcpreklandscape.ku.edu)). The website provided information about the landscape effort including the goals and intentions of the project. Respondents were able to access the survey through the website. For convenience, we also offered respondents the choice to answer the survey via telephone interview or paper survey.

**Public Meetings.** During Phase 1, two public informational meetings for early learning program directors and providers were offered to provide guidance on how to complete the survey. Four public informational meetings were held in Phase 2.

**Individual Contact.** Project staff and coaches encouraged providers to complete the surveys in multiple ways. Efforts to secure a completed survey included phone calls, emails, hard copies of reminders, text messages, and drop-in visits.

**Post-Survey Interviews.** Project staff individually reviewed each survey to look for data that appeared to be inaccurate, incomplete, or was marked as not applicable. If needed, staff then made phone calls to providers to follow up on the data they provided in an attempt to collect the most accurate data possible by

reviewing these items with providers for clarification. After the revisions were made to the survey, providers were thanked and incentives distributed. Each center received a \$100 debit card for completion; home-based programs received a \$50 debit card.

**Survey Data Quality.** The accuracy of responses was examined by matching survey responses to public archival data, including address, county, and accreditation status. Based on a random sample of 10% of centers and 10% of homes, for each phase, the agreement between the reported information and archival information was very high, 92% for all programs and counties.

**Develop and Maintain Study Relational Database.** Two Microsoft ACCESS 2013 databases, one for each phase, were created containing all of the survey information. These data have been provided to the Collaborative.

## SURVEY RETURN RATE

The overall return rate for Phase 1 was 58% and 50% for Phase 2 (see Table 10). School-based programs were most likely to participate, followed by centers, then homes. Some of the reasons for not completing the survey included lack of time, overall hesitation to complete surveys, lack of interest, bad timing (e.g., programs getting ready to close for the summer), and concern about divulging sensitive information such as program revenue.

The numbers reported for schools in Table 10 reflect school districts recruited. School districts were given the option to complete more than one survey if they housed more than one program type (e.g., Title I preschool, ECSE program) in the district. Some school districts chose to do so, but others opted to complete only one survey that summarized information across programs within the district. For Phase 1, all participating school districts completed one survey covering the entire district; for Phase 2, three districts completed one survey (representing 13 programs), and four districts completed 12 specific school-based program surveys. Thus, the sample sizes for schools reported throughout the document reflect the number of surveys completed about school-based programs and not the number of school districts recruited or the total number of early childhood program locations within the school districts.

**Table 10**

**Survey Return Rates for Phases 1 and 2**

	Jackson County, MO		Johnson County, KS		Wyandotte County, KS		Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, KS, combined	
Variable	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total Programs Recruited</b>	361		325		68		393	
<b>Total Returning Surveys</b>	209 out of 361	58%	159 out of 325	49%	38 out of 68	56%	197 out of 393	50%
<b>Schools</b>	10 out of 12	83%	4 out of 6	67%	3 out of 4	75%	7 out of 10	70%
<b>Centers</b>	123 out of 205	60%	102 out of 185	55%	23 out of 37	62%	125 out of 222	56%
<b>Homes</b>	76 out of 144	53%	53 out of 134	40%	12 out of 27	44%	65 out of 161	40%

# SUMMARY OF ECE LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS ACROSS GREATER KANSAS CITY

In this section, pertinent results from the Phase 1 (Jackson County) and Phase 2 (Johnson and Wyandotte Counties) reports are presented with the purposes of describing Greater Kansas City's ECE landscape and highlighting the crucial similarities and differences found between the two regions as well as among program types. Where appropriate, potential reasons for differences found between regions and program types are provided based primarily on demographic, economic, and policy contexts hypothesized to influence the ECE landscape.

Program characteristics are first presented, followed by characteristics of children served. The third section addresses other indicators of program quality, and the fourth section addresses staff issues.

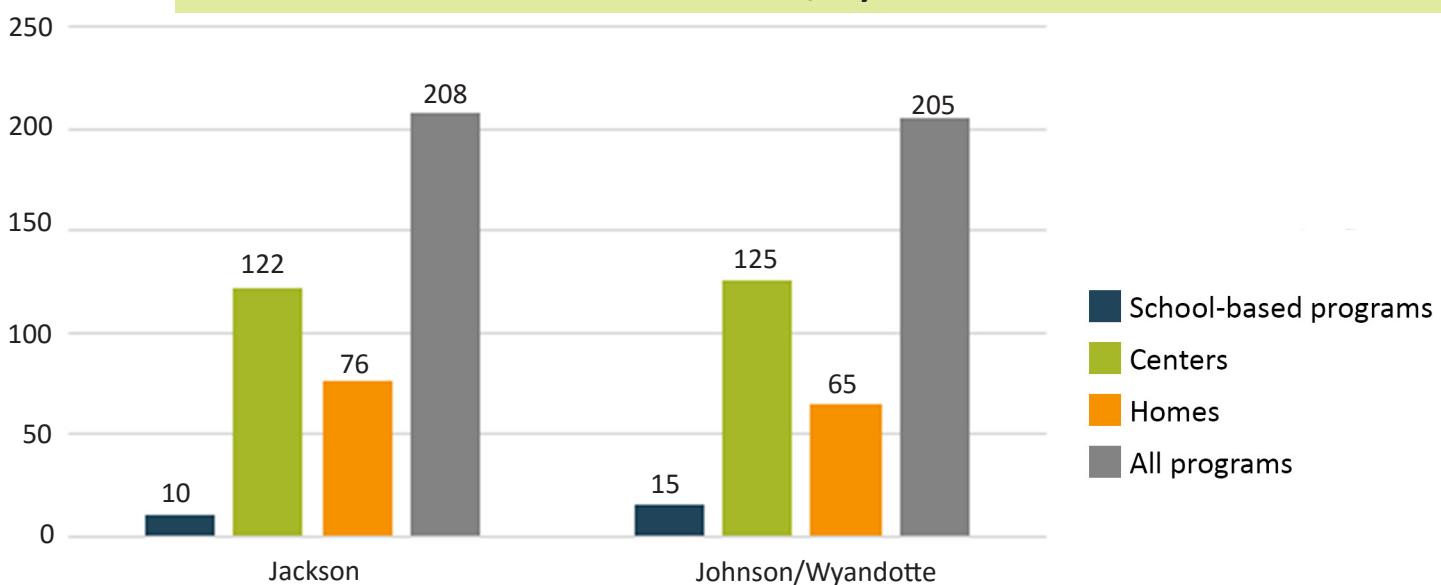
## PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

For Phase 1, all school-based and licensed centers and homes in Jackson County were recruited for the study. For Phase 2, all school-based and licensed centers were recruited, but only a sample of licensed homes were recruited due to the large number of homes in Johnson/Wyandotte. In addition, the school-based program data represents information for most school district ECE programs. However, because school districts were given the option to complete more than one survey if they had more than one type of ECE program within the district, the sample size for school-based programs does not represent the number of school-based programs surveyed (see Survey Return Rate in the Methods section). Because of these issues, the sample sizes for programs surveyed by program type are not necessarily representative of the actual number of programs within both regions.

As shown in Figure 13, the program samples for Phases 1 and 2 were very similar with respect to program type. For Jackson County, 5% of programs were school-based, 59% were centers, and 36% were homes. For Johnson/Wyandotte Counties, 7% were school-based, 61% were centers, and 32% were homes.

Figure 13

Program Participation by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties

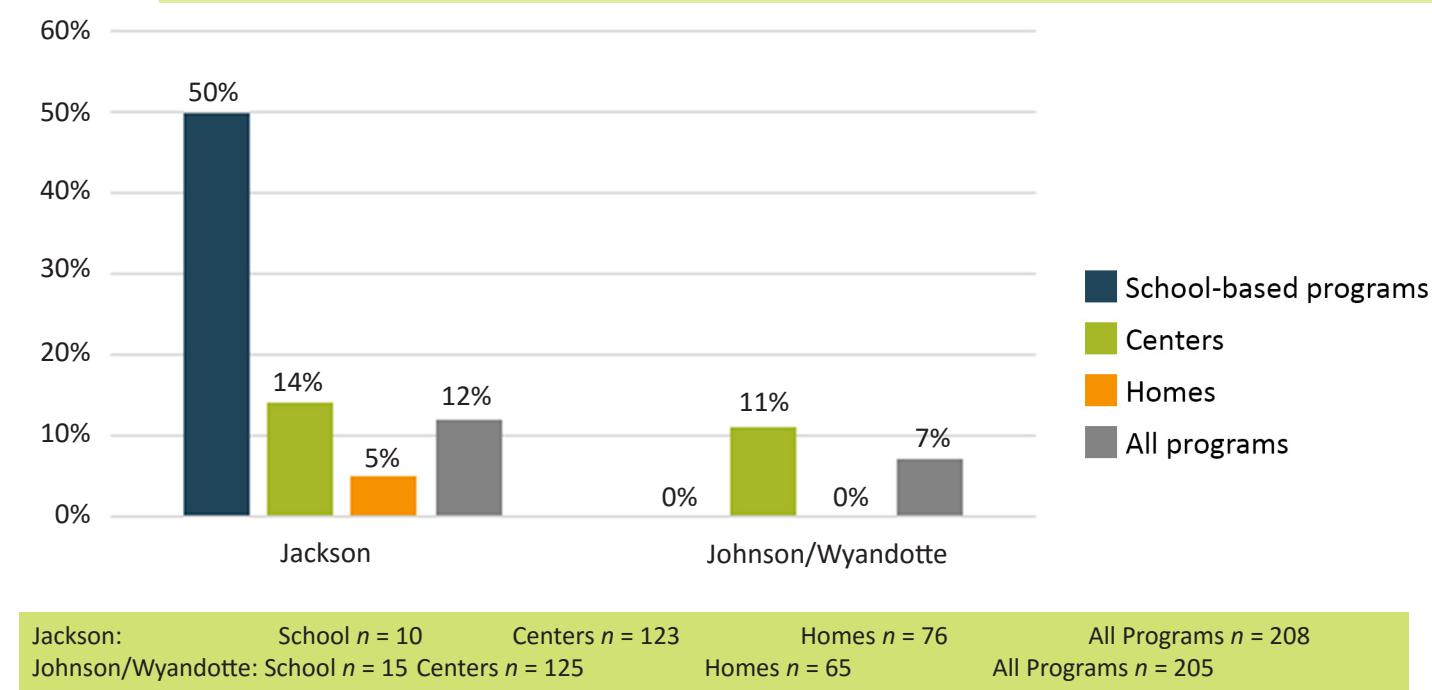


Program accreditation is one of the frequently used indicators of quality that was surveyed. In order to be accredited, ECE programs must meet specific evidence-based standards of quality that surpass licensing requirements; these standards differ somewhat by accrediting entity. Programs that held current accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), and Missouri Accreditation (MoA) were counted as accredited for this project.

As shown in Figure 14, Jackson County had more accredited programs in both frequency and percentage compared to Johnson/Wyandotte Counties. It is noteworthy that no school-based or home-based programs were accredited in Johnson/Wyandotte. The difference in accreditation across the two regions is due to a number of factors. Programs in Jackson County have more incentives to be accredited than those in Kansas. First, they receive additional state subsidy dollars from Missouri's Department of Social Services (DSS) if they are accredited. In addition, the United Way of Greater Kansas City, which supports many Jackson County programs serving children in poverty, requires that programs be accredited for any funding support. Missouri ECE programs can be accredited by Missouri Accreditation, an entity that accredits programs that only operate within the state of Missouri. Kansas does not have a similar accrediting entity. Finally, on the Kansas side, there are no quality improvement initiatives aimed at supporting accreditation.

**Figure 14**

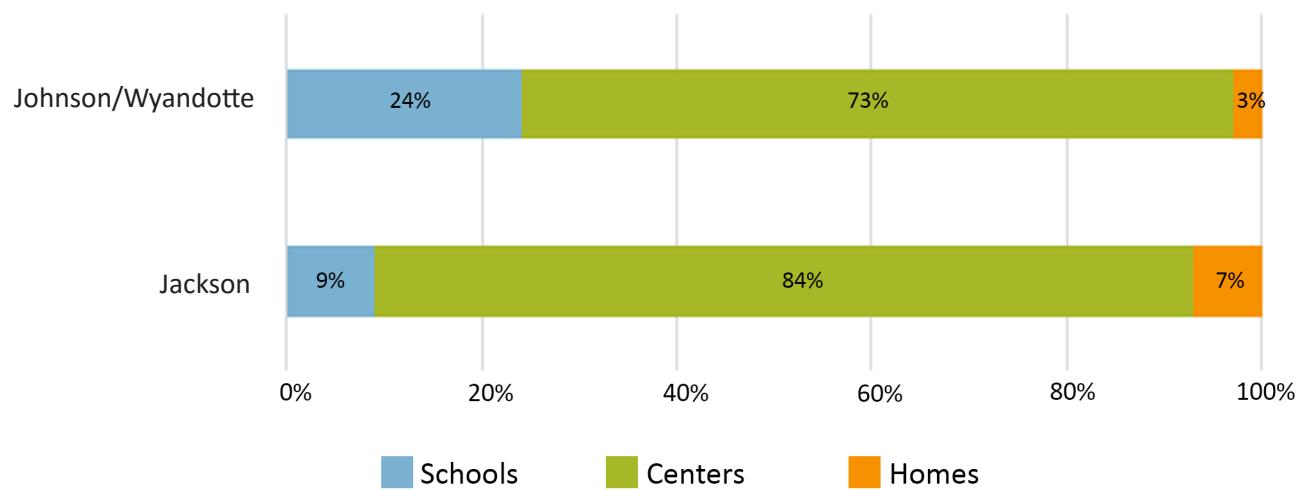
**Accredited Programs by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



As shown in Figure 15, centers served the majority of children in both regions, with school-based programs serving the next highest percentage of children, followed by homes. It should be noted that these percentages reflect the numbers reported by programs in our samples. In particular, the percentage of children served by homes reported here is not reflective of the actual home-based program population for a few reasons. For Phase 2, in order to control project costs, we sampled homes in both Johnson and Wyandotte Counties due to the large number of licensed family homes rather than recruiting the entire population of home providers in those counties. Kansas has more licensed homes than Missouri because Kansas licensing regulations require that most homes serving more than two unrelated children must be licensed, whereas in Missouri, homes are not required to be licensed unless they serve more than four unrelated children. The true number of children served is not available from the state departments that license the programs since their administrative records reflect only the total licensed capacity of the facility, which includes children who are school-age.

**Figure 15**

**Children Served by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



Jackson County children served  $n = 10,081$

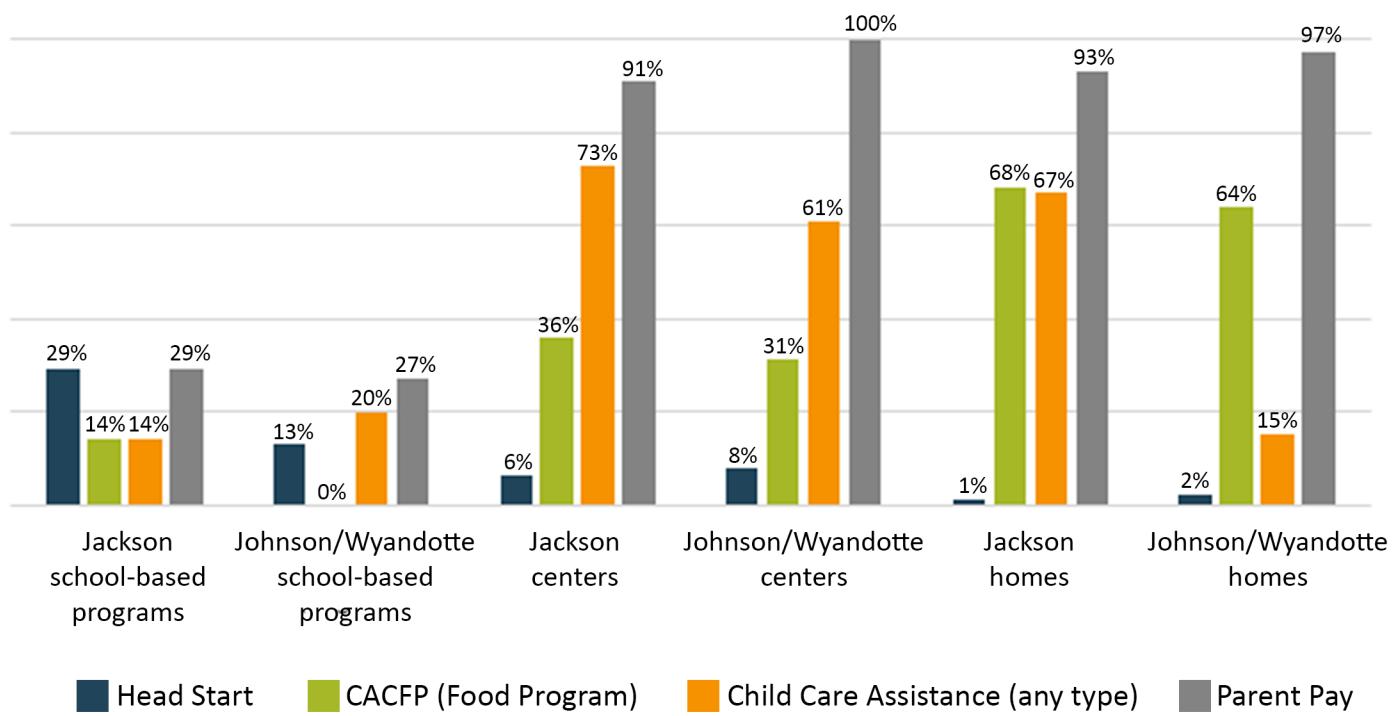
Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served  $n = 16,411$

Figure 16 shows the proportion of programs that use various funding sources. Funding sources differed greatly by program type. Schools were more likely to use Head Start funds than centers and homes. Almost all centers and homes relied on parent fees, whereas less than a third of school-based programs did so. A majority of Jackson centers and homes, as well as Johnson/Wyandotte centers, reported child care subsidies as a source of revenue. On the other hand, only 15% of Johnson/Wyandotte homes reported taking child care subsidies. It should be noted that most school-based programs surveyed did not take child care subsidies. However, many schools receive Title I funding, which is based on the percentage of children who receive free/reduced meal prices. Those data are not reflected in Figure 10. About two-thirds of homes in both regions reported that Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) was a source of revenue, making it the second most cited source of funding after parent pay.

It should be noted that many school-based programs used Part B Special Education funds to fund their programs. In addition, state-based preschool programs provided funds to eligible programs. In the Jackson County sample, two school districts had Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) grants, which helped to fund their sites. Two school districts—one in Wyandotte, one in Johnson—had Kansas Preschool Program grants. In addition, almost all school-based programs in Kansas received funds from the Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten Program.

**Figure 16**

## Funding Sources by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



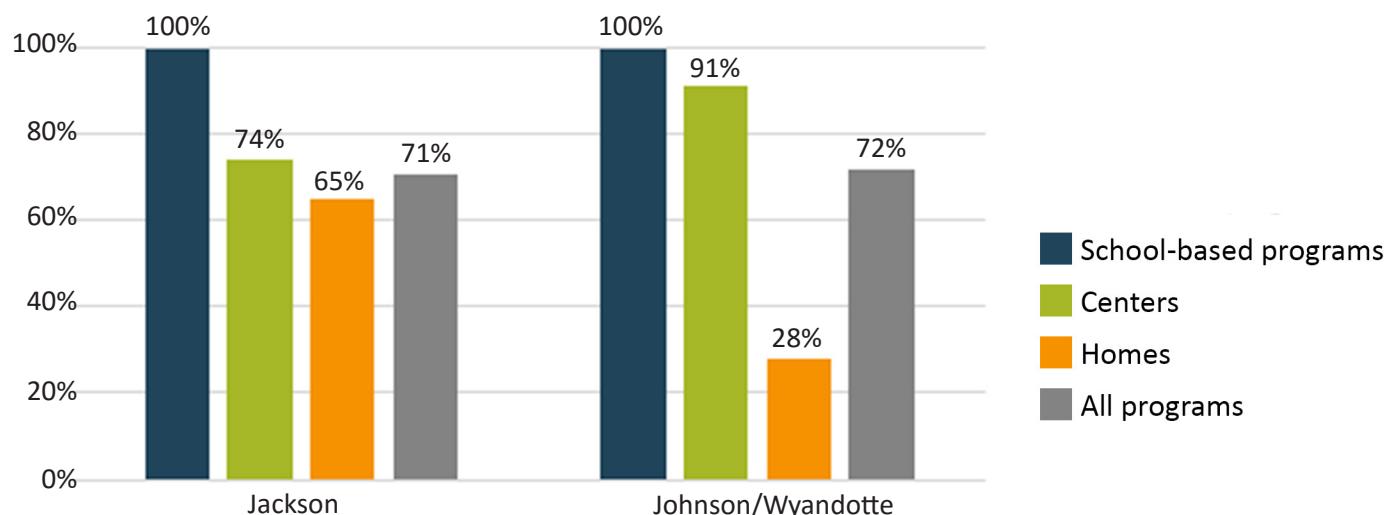
Jackson:	School n = 7	Centers n = 117	Homes n = 76
Johnson/Wyandotte:	School n = 15	Centers n = 114	Homes n = 63

Across both regions, nearly three-quarters of programs reported using a curriculum. All school-based programs and most centers across the two areas reported using a curriculum. Due to financial constraints, typical home provider education levels, and generally less structured environments, homes are less likely to use curriculum than centers and school-based programs.

The percentage of Jackson homes using a curriculum (65%) was far higher than that for Johnson/Wyandotte homes (28%). This difference between the regions may be due to the fact that only licensed programs were recruited for the study. In Kansas, all home-based programs that serve more than two unrelated children for more than 20 hours must be licensed; in Missouri, homes may be licensed or non-regulated. In Jackson County, about 20% of known home-based programs are licensed and only those programs could be recruited for the study. The authors hypothesize that the licensed home providers in Jackson County may be more motivated to embrace indicators of quality, including curriculum use, given the effort required for licensure.

**Figure 17**

### Use of a Curriculum by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



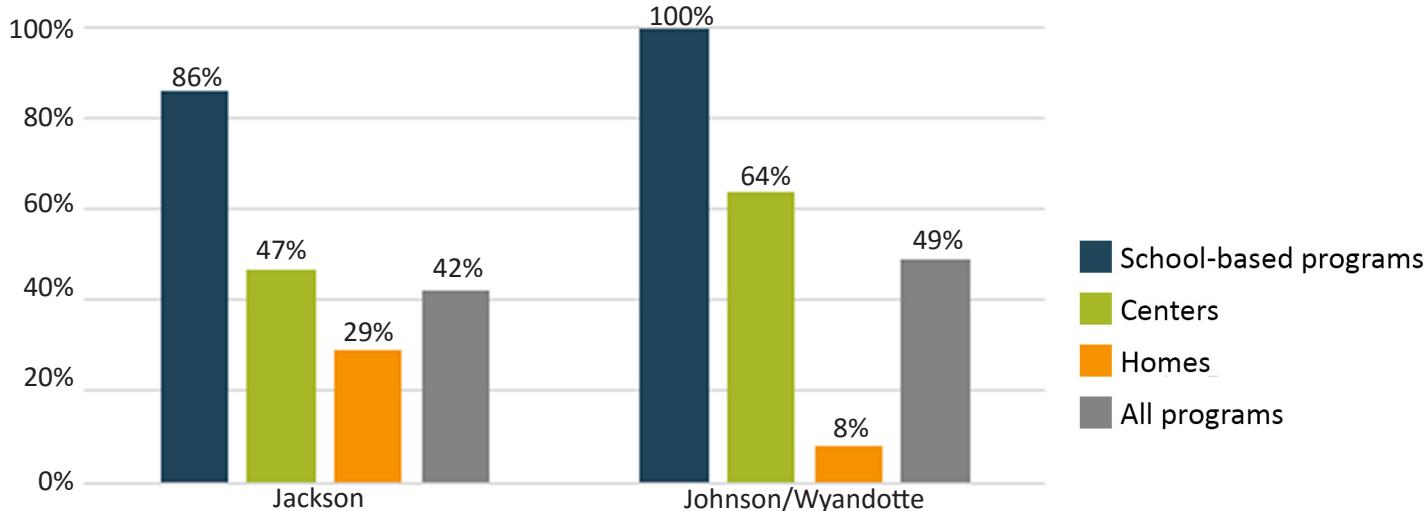
Jackson:	School n = 7	Centers n = 123	Homes n = 76	All Programs n = 206
Johnson/Wyandotte:	School n = 15	Centers n = 125	Homes n = 65	All Programs n = 205

As shown in Figures 18-19, more than two out of five programs reported use of child assessments and kindergarten readiness assessments across both regions. School-based programs were most likely to use child assessments and kindergarten readiness measures, followed by centers, then homes. Although homes in general are not very likely to use child assessments and kindergarten readiness measures, Jackson homes were far more likely to use them than Johnson/Wyandotte homes, which may be related to the differential rates of curriculum use discussed above.

The differences seen between program types can be explained by financial resources and different expectations around accountability. School-based programs have access to the most resources and are more likely to use assessments given the culture and requirements of accountability found in schools. Centers tend to have fewer financial resources than schools but more than homes. Centers are generally not as assessment-focused as schools but are more likely to address accountability than most home-based programs.

**Figure 18**

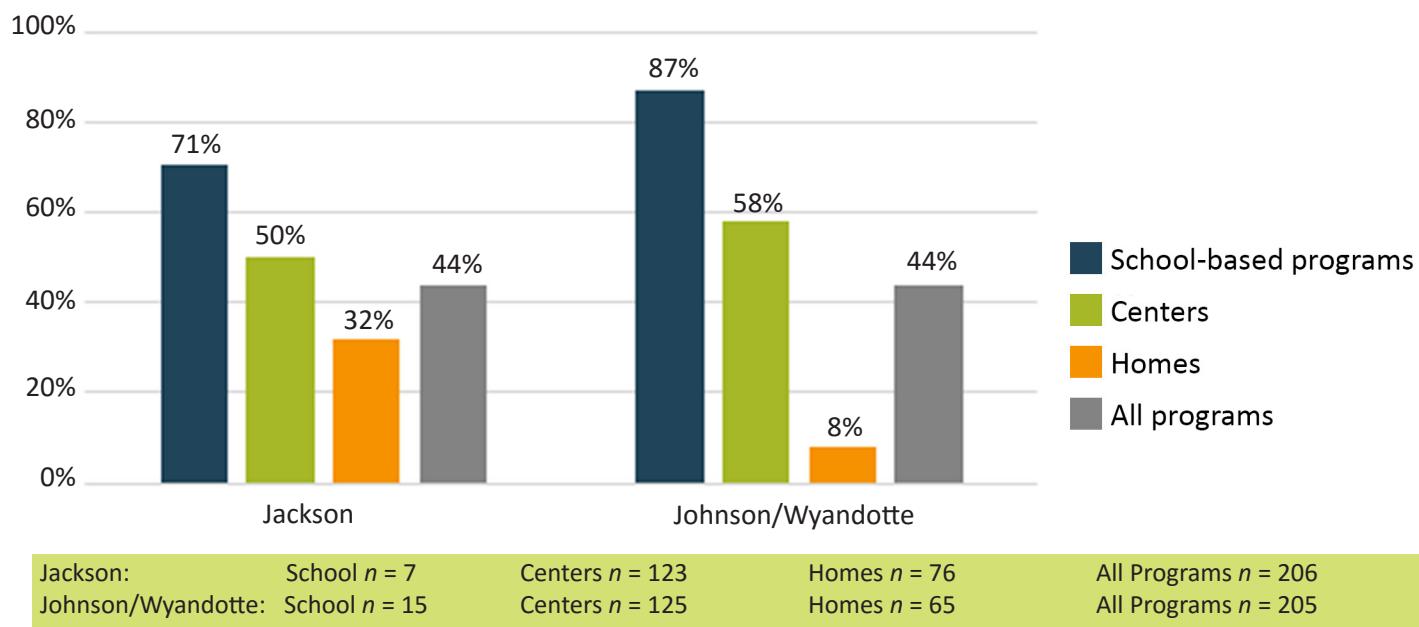
### Assessment of Children by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



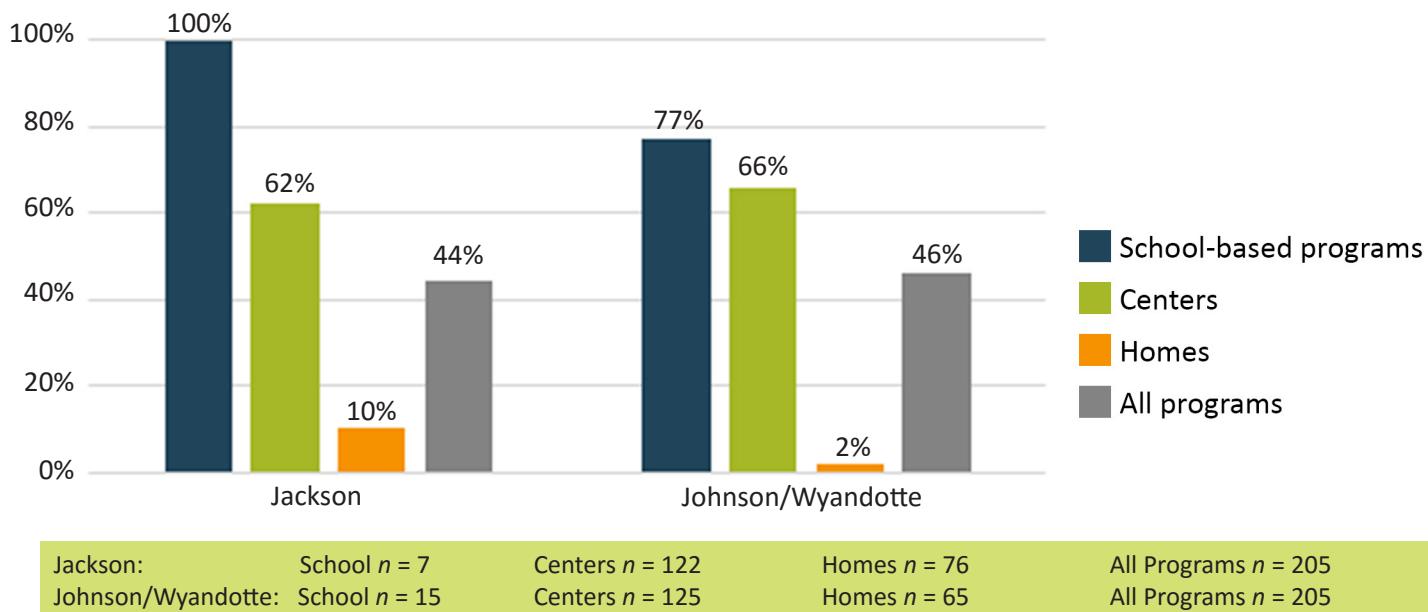
Jackson:	School n = 7	Centers n = 122	Homes n = 76	All Programs n = 205
Johnson/Wyandotte:	School n = 15	Centers n = 125	Homes n = 65	All Programs n = 205

**Figure 19**

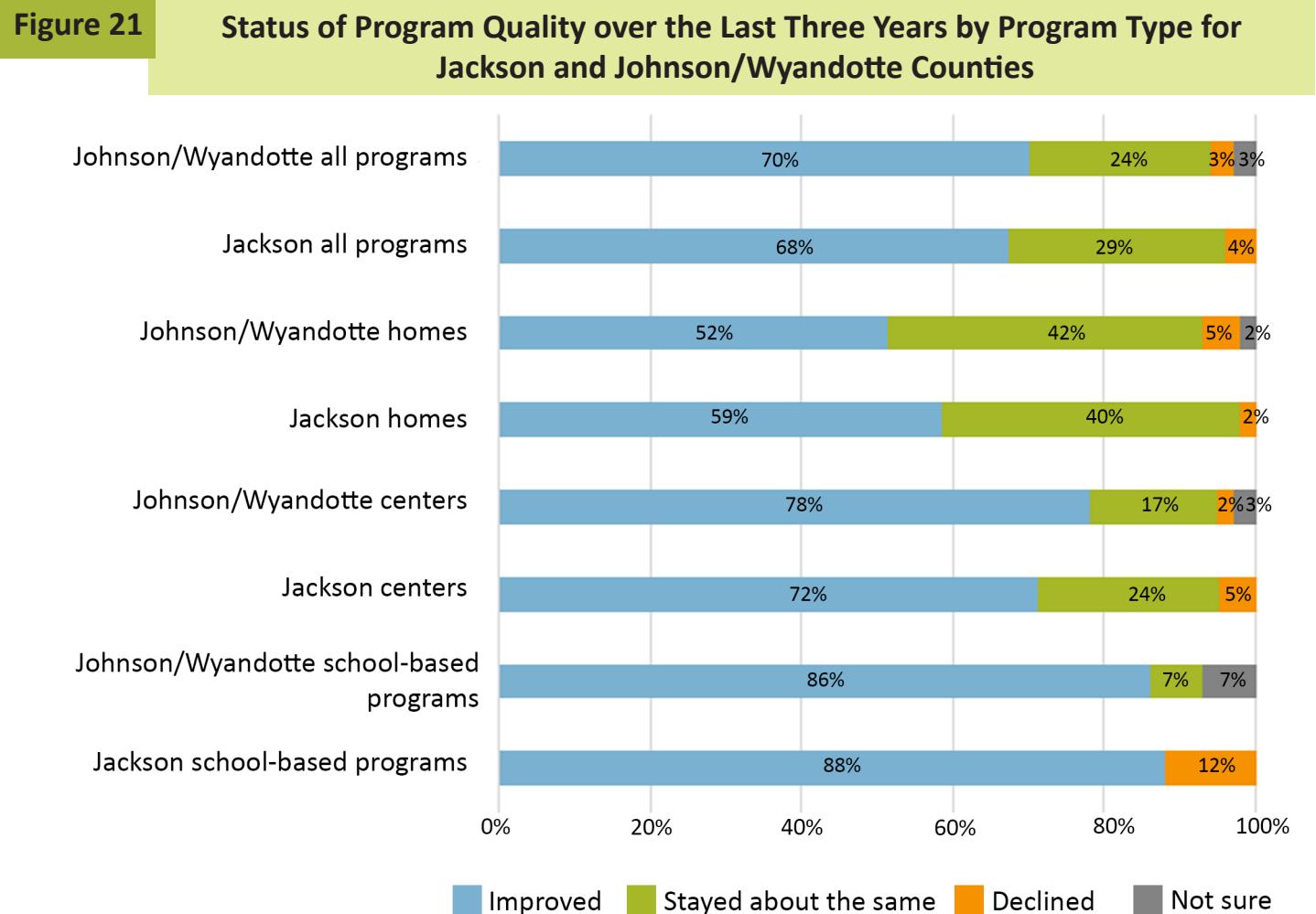
### Assessment of Kindergarten Readiness by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



As shown in Figure 20, school-based programs were most likely to report using teacher assessments and observations, followed by centers. Homes in both regions were much less likely to use staff assessments, which is not surprising given that most homes are staffed by a single provider. The overall use of staff assessments was comparable between the two regions. The differences between school-based programs and centers can be explained, as for child assessments, by financial resources and expectations around accountability. Schools have the most resources and greatest need for accountability, whereas centers typically fall somewhat below them on both dimensions.

**Figure 20** Staff Assessment by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties

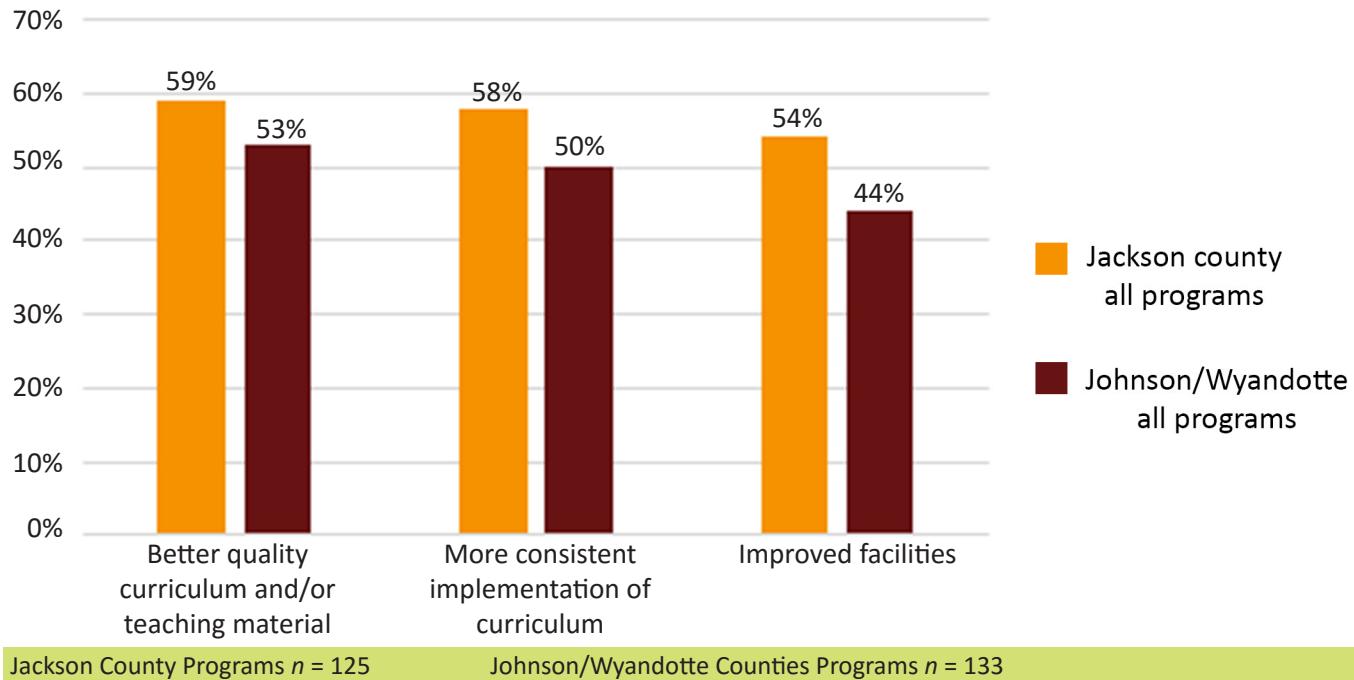
Programs that had been in business more than three years were asked whether they felt their program quality had improved, stayed the same, or declined (see Figure 21). Across both regions, more than two-thirds of programs overall indicated that program quality had improved over the last three years. Schools were most likely to report improved quality, followed by centers, then homes. The differences seen between program types can be explained by financial resources and different expectations around accountability. School-based programs have access to the most resources and are more likely to address program quality given the culture and requirements of accountability found in most schools. Centers tend to have fewer financial resources than schools but more than homes. Centers generally do not focus on accountability as much as schools, but they are more likely to address it than most home-based programs. On a positive note, few programs across all types reported program decline in the three-year period. It should be noted that the results reported here are the opinions of those surveyed; this project did not conduct any observation-based measures of quality.



Programs that indicated their program quality had increased over the last three years were asked to cite reasons for quality improvement. The reasons for quality improvement were similar across program type and region; the top three reasons were better curriculum/teacher materials, more consistent curriculum implementation, and improved facilities.

**Figure 22**

**Top Three Reasons Cited for Program Improvement for All Programs for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



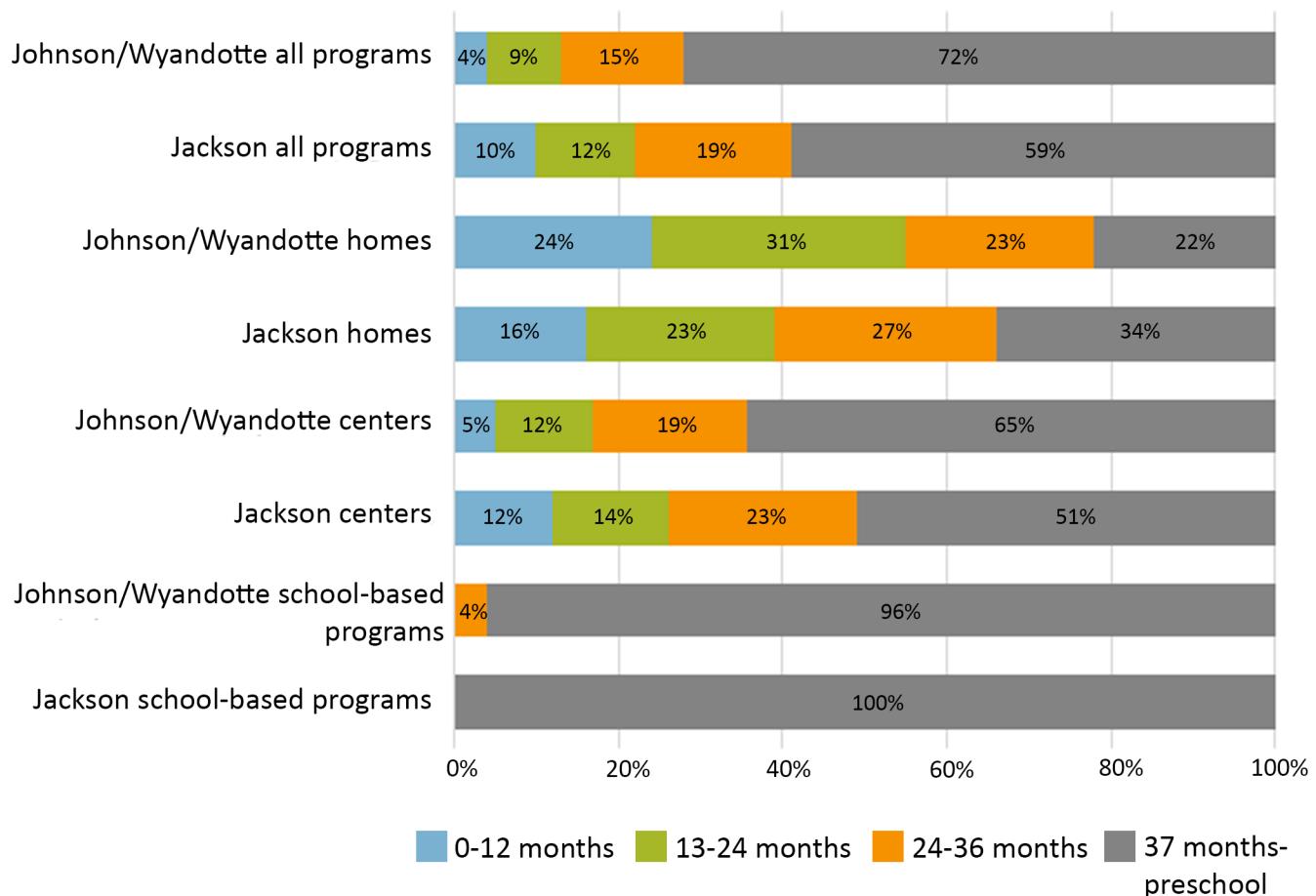
## CHILD CHARACTERISTICS

The same caveats regarding representativeness of the sample figures discussed in the previous section hold true for child characteristics by program type and region.

As shown in Figure 23, in both regions the majority of children served were older than three. Across both regions, children under the age of three were served mostly in homes and centers, whereas school-based programs almost exclusively served children three years or older. Because homes offer a more affordable option than centers, as well as generally greater flexibility around care schedules, it is not surprising that many families choose homes for their children less than a year old.

**Figure 23**

**Age of Children Served by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

School *n* = 1,917 Centers *n* = 7,555 Homes *n* = 609 All *n* = 10,081

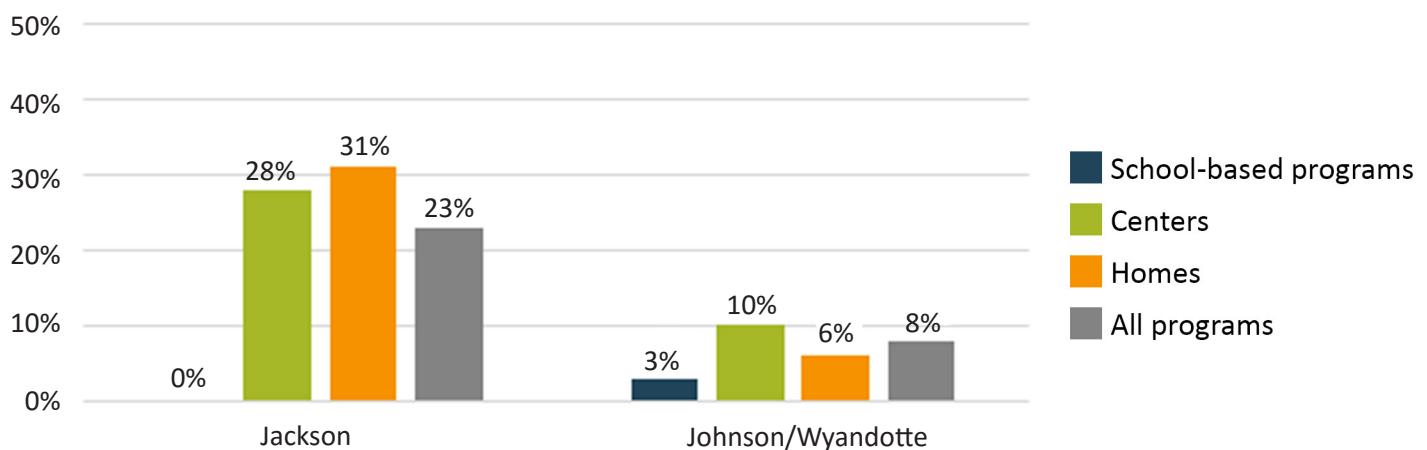
School *n* = 3,781 Centers *n* = 10,846 Homes *n* = 400 All *n* = 15,027

As shown in Figure 24, the regions differed with respect to the percentage of children receiving child care subsidies. Overall, nearly a quarter of children served in Jackson programs received subsidies, compared to only 1 in 12 children in Johnson/Wyandotte programs. Jackson County centers and homes served a larger percentage of children on subsidies than Johnson/Wyandotte centers and homes. It should be noted that most school-based programs surveyed did not take child care subsidies. However, many schools receive Title I funding, which is based on the percentage of children who receive free/reduced meal prices. Those data are not reflected in Figure 20.

It is hypothesized that the difference in child care subsidy receipt between the two regions is due to several factors. First, the combined Johnson/Wyandotte region has a lower percentage of poor families and children than Jackson County, which means that fewer children are eligible for child care subsidies. Second, Missouri has policies that provide additional subsidy dollars to programs if they serve a large number of children eligible for state subsidy (at least 50%) and if they are accredited. Third, Kansas parents have experienced greater barriers in accessing subsidy than Missouri parents. Kansas recently closed a number of Department for Children and Families (DCF) regional offices where families used to be able to apply for subsidy in person. Now, the subsidy application is only available online. In addition, Kansas requirements for subsidy are more stringent than Missouri's. For example, in order to eligible for child care subsidy in Kansas, parents who are attending college/university must spend 20 hours a week in school and work an additional 15 hours per week.

**Figure 24**

**Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



Note. Three out of 10 school-based programs in Jackson County did not report data on number of children on subsidies.

Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

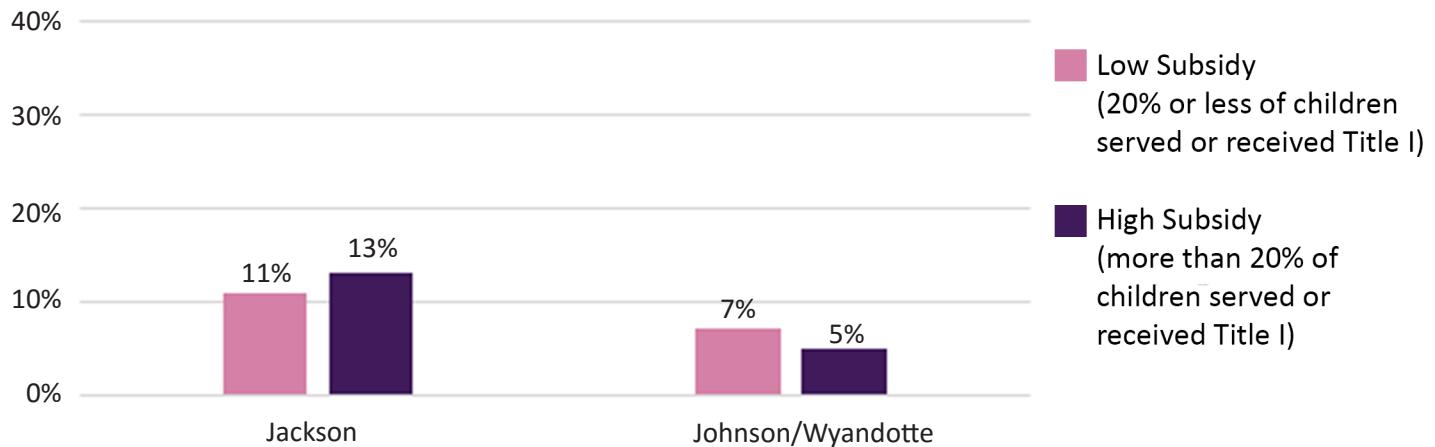
School  $n = 1,917$  Centers  $n = 7,555$  Homes  $n = 609$  All  $n = 10,081$

School  $n = 3,976$  Centers  $n = 12,023$  Homes  $n = 412$  All  $n = 16,411$

An important consideration with respect to accreditation is whether children from families with low incomes have access to accredited programs. As shown in Figure 25, 13% of programs in Jackson County that served a high proportion of children on subsidies were accredited, compared to 11% of centers serving a low proportion. For Johnson/Wyandotte Counties, 7% of high subsidy programs were accredited and 5% of low subsidy programs were accredited. These data suggest that low-income families accessed accredited programs at nearly the same but low rates as families with higher incomes across both regions.

**Figure 25**

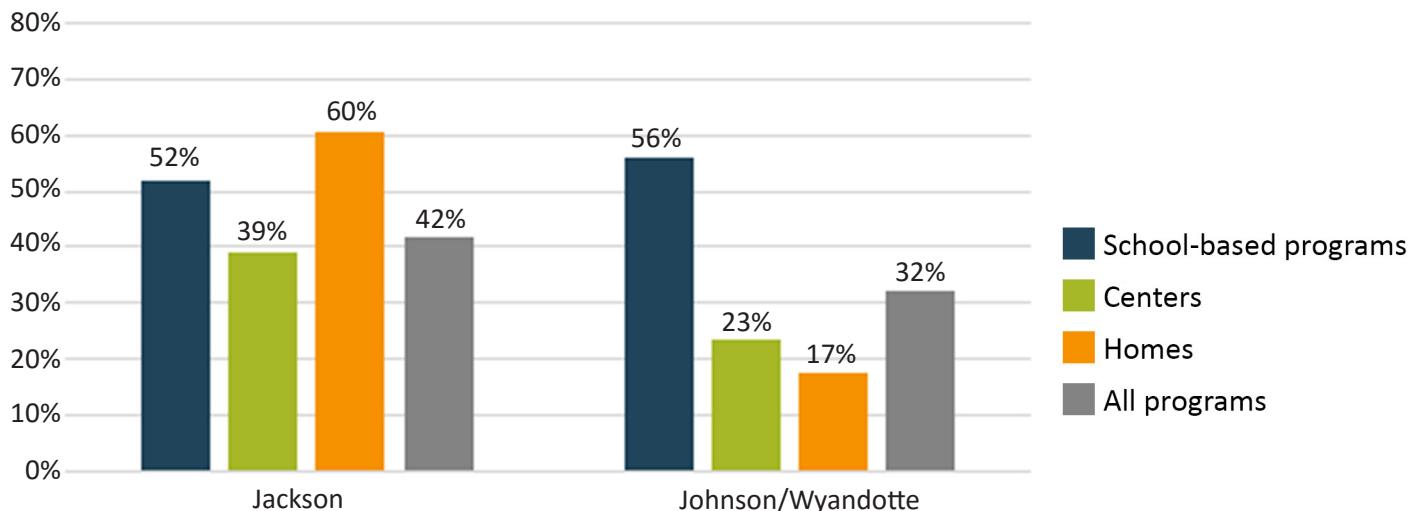
### Program Subsidy Category (High/Low) for Accredited Programs in Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



Overall, the percentage of minority children served in Jackson programs (42%) is somewhat higher than the percentage of minority children in Johnson/Wyandotte programs (32%), which is consistent with the demographic profiles of the regions. In Jackson County, more than half the children served in homes were from racial/ethnic minority groups, compared to about one in six for Johnson/Wyandotte homes. The reasons for this discrepancy are unknown.

**Figure 26**

### Minority Children Served by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

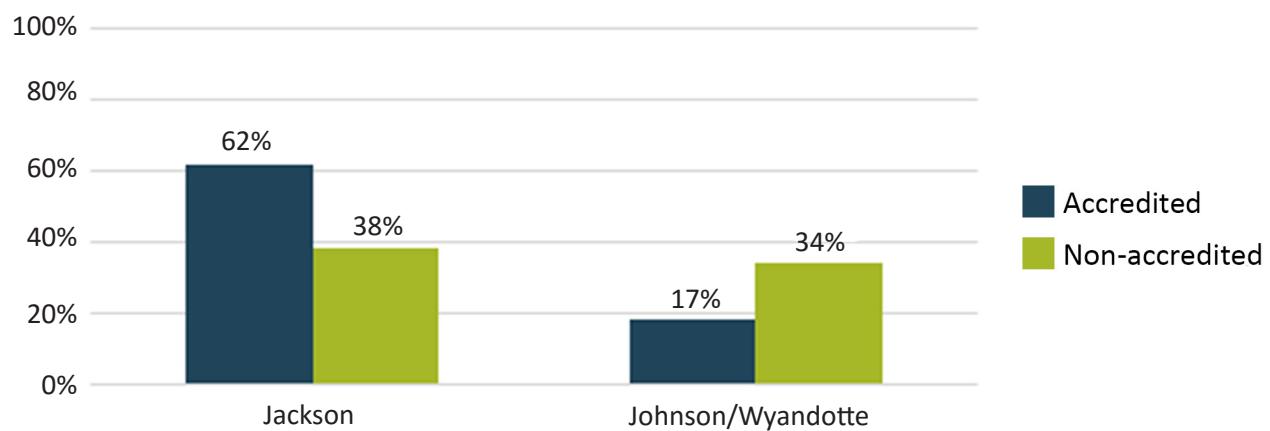
School  $n = 1,917$  Centers  $n = 7,555$  Homes  $n = 609$  All  $n = 10,081$

School  $n = 3,976$  Centers  $n = 12,023$  Homes  $n = 412$  All  $n = 16,411$

Another important consideration with respect to accreditation is whether children of all races/ethnicities have access to accredited programs. As shown in Figure 27, in Jackson County, nearly two-thirds (62%) of the children in accredited programs were from racial/ethnic minority groups, based on child counts, whereas the percentage in non-accredited programs was much lower (38%). These data suggest that minority children accessed accredited programs at higher rates than non-minority children. However, the opposite was true for the Johnson/Wyandotte region, where the percentage of minority enrollment in accredited programs was about half that of non-accredited programs. Based on these survey data, it appears that minority children on the Kansas side are not accessing accredited programs—the few that exist—to the same extent as non-minority children. One potential reason for this inequity is that most of the accredited programs on the Kansas side were in Johnson County, which has relatively fewer minority children compared to Wyandotte and Jackson Counties.

**Figure 27**

**Minority Children Served by Accreditation Status for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

Accredited *n* = 1,995

Accredited *n* = 1,374

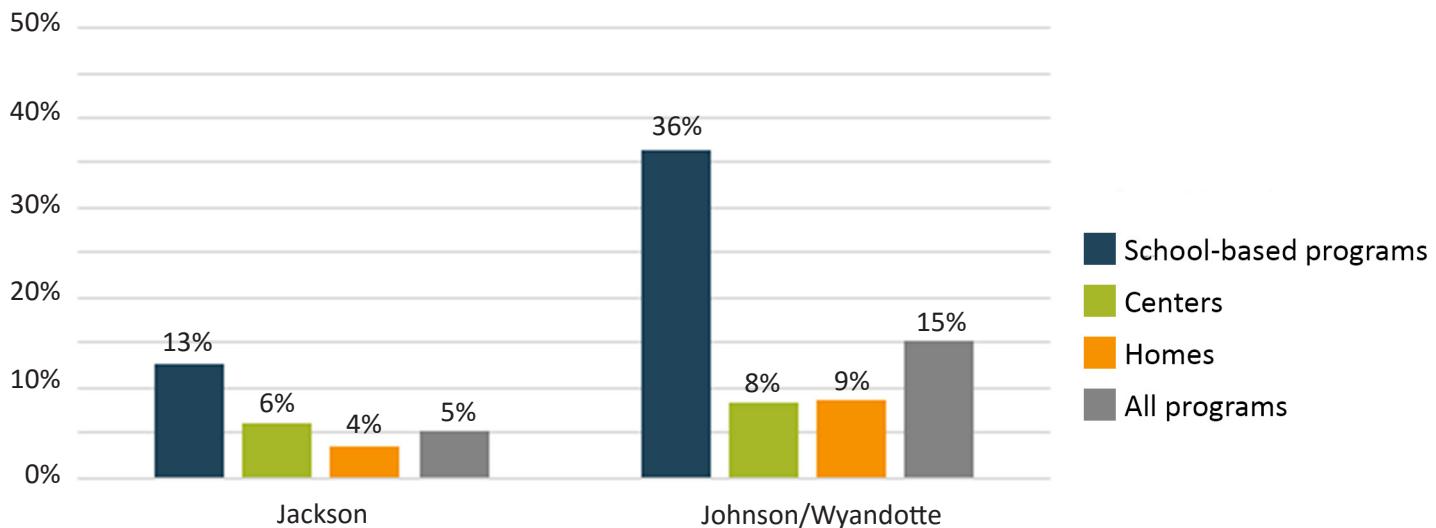
Non-accredited *n* = 7,858

Non-accredited *n* = 13,367

The percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) was three times higher in Johnson/Wyandotte compared to Jackson. This trend was mostly driven by the higher percentage of ELL children in school-based programs, where more than one-third of children served in Johnson/Wyandotte spoke a language besides English. The language most spoken was Spanish. Part of this difference may be explained by the higher percentage of Hispanics/Latinos in the Johnson/Wyandotte region compared to Jackson County, as well as the higher percentage of residents that speak languages besides English. In addition, ELL status is one of the eligibility criteria for children served in the Kansas State Pre-K Program and the Kansas Preschool Program, which may also have driven higher enrollment of ELL children on the Kansas side. School-based programs may enroll more ELL children because schools often do not require parent pay, and many ELL children come from poor families, and because schools may have more resources to address the needs of ELL children and their families than centers and homes.

**Figure 28**

### English Language Learners by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



Jackson County children served:

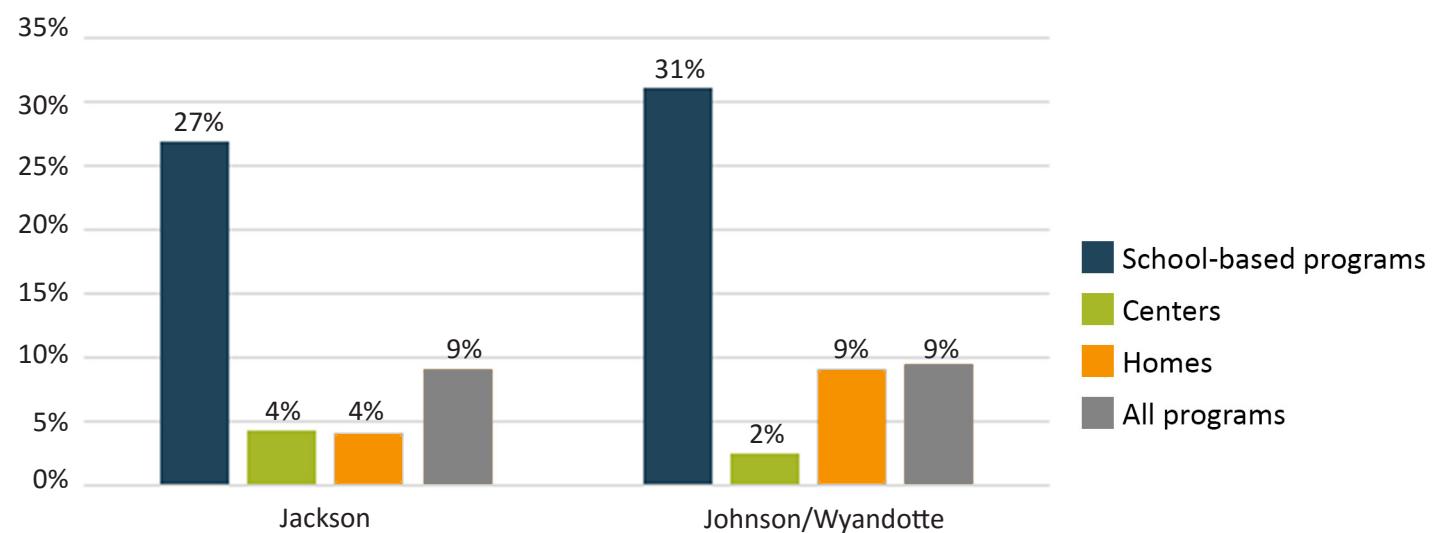
Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

School *n* = 1,917Centers *n* = 7,555Homes *n* = 609All *n* = 10,081School *n* = 3,976Centers *n* = 12,023Homes *n* = 412All *n* = 16,411

As shown in Figure 29, the overall percentage of children receiving special services was the same for both regions. School-based programs had the highest percentage enrollment of children receiving special services in both areas, which is not surprising given that IDEA requires that school districts provide free appropriate education for children with disabilities. Because schools are one of the primary venues for identifying children with special needs beyond the age of three, ECE school-based programs were more likely to serve identified children. In addition, since school-based programs serve older children and identification for special services increases with child age, schools are more likely to identify and serve children with special needs.

**Figure 29**

### Children Receiving Special Services by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties



Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

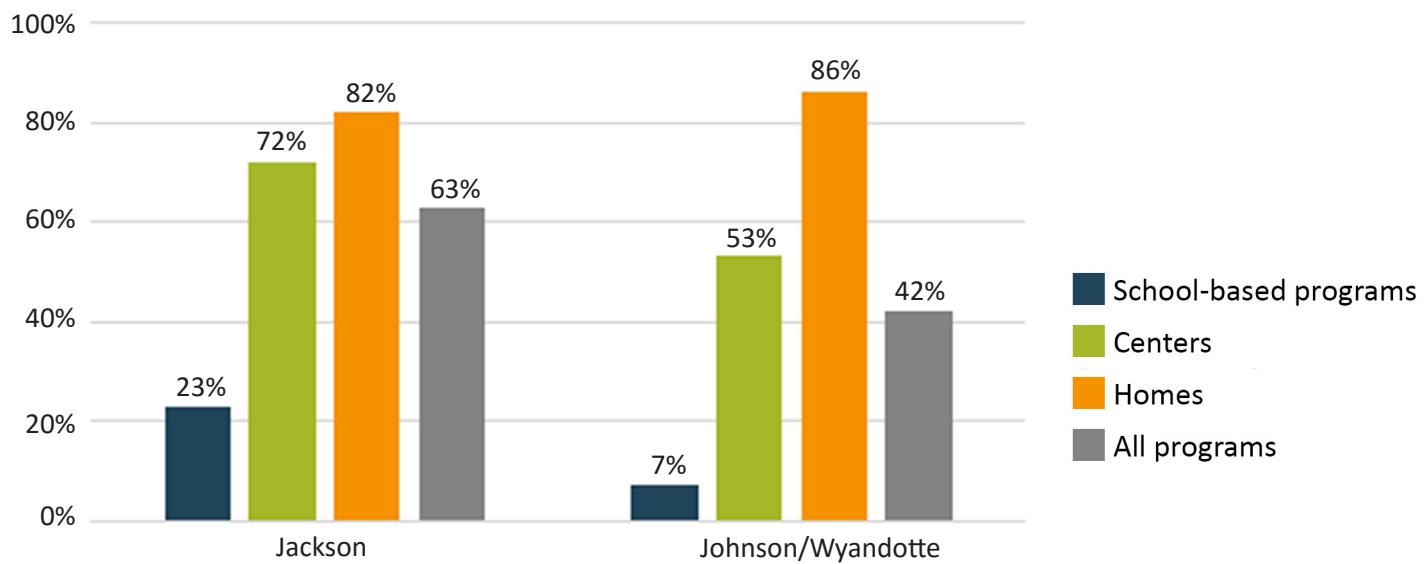
School *n* = 1,917Centers *n* = 7,555Homes *n* = 609All *n* = 10,081School *n* = 3,976Centers *n* = 12,023Homes *n* = 412All *n* = 16,411

As shown in Figure 30, full-time enrollment varied by program type. School-based programs had the lowest full-time enrollment. Centers tended to have a mix of children attending part- and full-time. Homes generally served children full-time.

For all programs, Jackson County had a higher percentage of full-time enrollment (63%) compared to Johnson/Wyandotte Counties (42%). Jackson school-based programs and centers had higher full-time enrollment percentages than their counterparts in Johnson/Wyandotte. The percentage of children enrolled full time in homes was similar across both regions. Two potential reasons may explain some of the differences seen between Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte regarding full-time enrollment, First, three Jackson school districts reported having MPP programs, and MPP programs require that children attend at least 6.5 hours per day, making all those children full-time. On the other hand, the two Kansas preschool programs (Kansas State Pre-K Program and Kansas Preschool Program) only require children to attend 3 hours a day. Also, it is hypothesized that there is less need for full-time care on the Kansas side, especially in Johnson County. Finally, school-based programs in Jackson County are more likely to have Head Start funding and presumably to blend those funds to cover more hours of care.

**Figure 30**

**Full-Time Children Enrolled by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



Jackson County children served:

Johnson/Wyandotte Counties children served:

School  $n = 1,917$  Centers  $n = 7,555$  Homes  $n = 609$  All  $n = 10,081$

School  $n = 3,781$  Centers  $n = 10,846$  Homes  $n = 400$  All  $n = 15,027$

## STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

School- and center-based programs were asked to provide the highest level of education completed by most of their lead teachers. Home providers were asked to report their highest level of education. Figure 31 shows the percentage of programs reporting that most of their lead teachers have a bachelor's degree for both regions and all three counties. All school-based programs across the three counties reported that most of their lead teachers had a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, center lead teachers and home providers were less likely to have a bachelor's degree than school-based lead teachers. Centers in Jackson County reported a smaller percentage of most lead teachers having a bachelor's degree compared to centers in Johnson/Wyandotte. Similarly, home providers in Jackson County were much less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to Johnson/Wyandotte home providers. The center and home figures for Jackson County are very similar to those for Wyandotte County, whereas the percentage of lead teachers/providers with a bachelor's degree are much higher in Johnson County, which is not surprising given the higher levels of income and education compared to the other counties.

**Figure 31 Education Level: Most Lead Teachers Have a Bachelor's Degree by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**

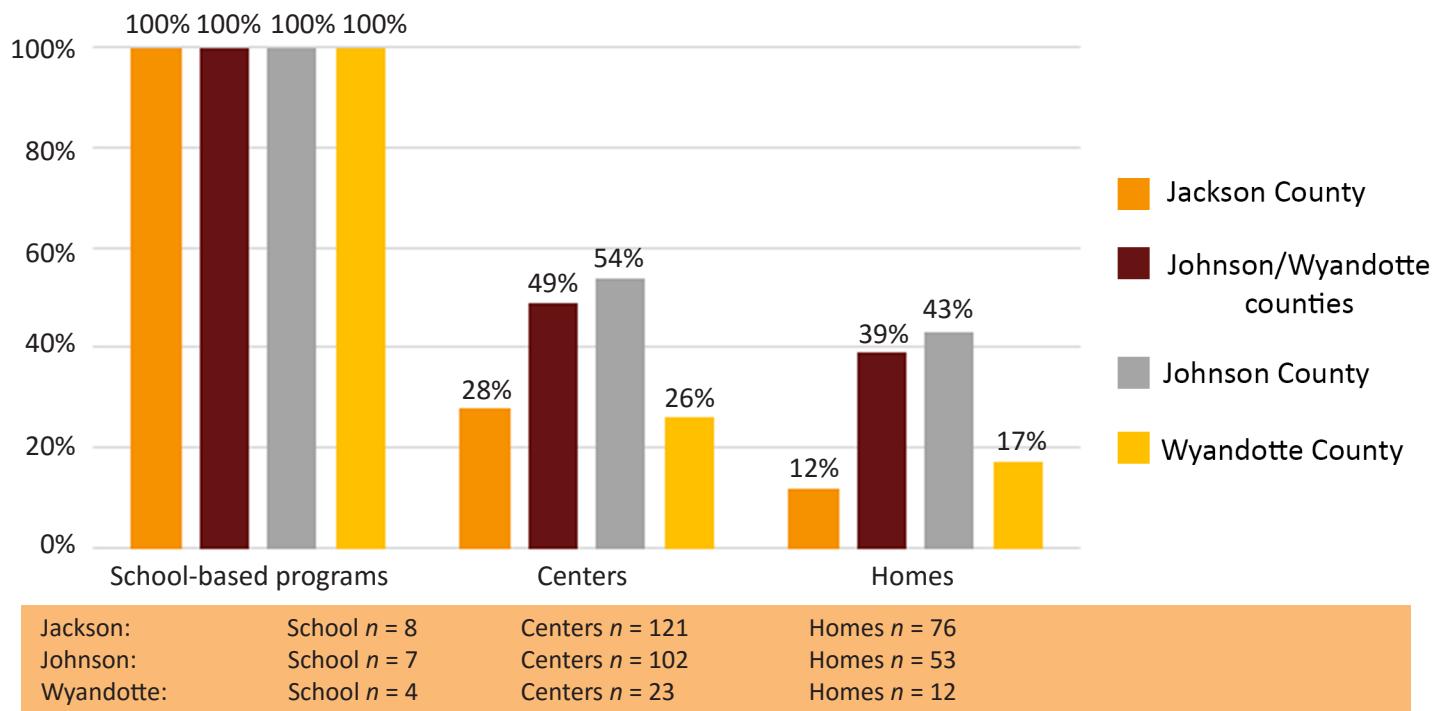


Figure 32 shows average starting hourly wages by program type for lead and assistant teachers as reported by programs. Home providers were not asked about their hourly wage. It should be noted that some programs, especially school-based programs, did not respond to wage survey items. (Note that the figure reported for school-based lead teachers in Jackson County is based on a single case.)

School-based lead teachers' starting wages were more than twice as high as those for center lead teachers in both regions. The pay for assistant teachers was also highest in schools. Based on region, only one difference stands out: the starting hourly wage for center lead teachers in Johnson/Wyandotte was 14% higher than their counterpart's figure in Jackson County. The difference between regions is not driven by vastly higher wages in Johnson County; the starting hourly wage for center lead teachers in Johnson County (\$10.82) was not much higher than that for Wyandotte County (\$10.60).

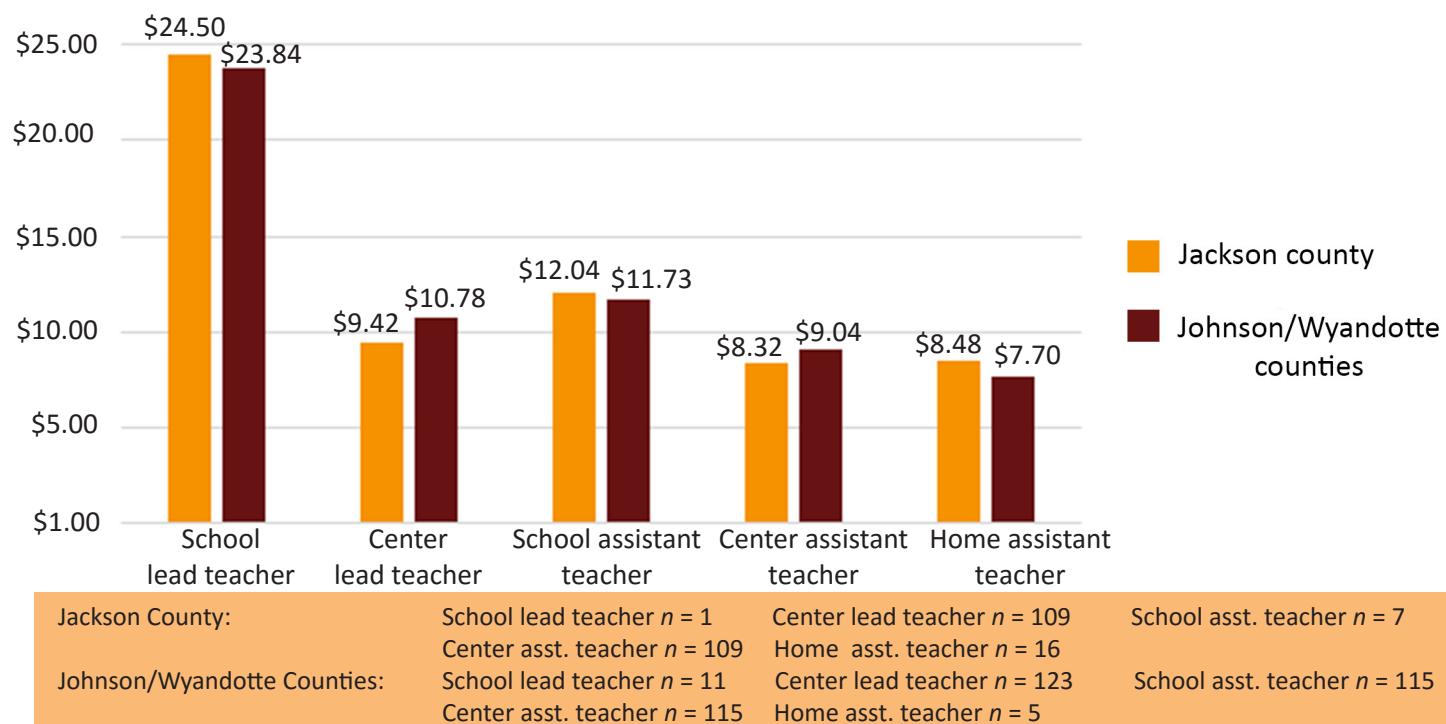
The hourly wage figures reported here are similar to average wages reported by other data sources. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) surveys workers across the county and across all industry types. Two BLS occupational codes provide a comparison for these data: preschool teachers (except special education) and childcare workers. For BLS purposes, preschool teachers work in school-based programs, preschools, and centers, whereas childcare workers work in centers (most similar to center assistant teachers) and homes (most similar to home providers). For the Kansas City metropolitan region in May 2015, the BLS reported the median wage for preschool teachers (except those in special education) was \$12.23 an hour and the median hourly wage for child care workers was \$9.66 (BLS, 2016). By comparison, kindergarten teachers in the Kansas City metro region earned \$27 an hour (\$47,370 full-time salary, divided by 1,600 hours based on 10 months) (BLS, 2016). Due to differences in how workers are classified, it is difficult to make a straightforward comparison to the wage data reported for both phases of the Landscape Study. However, given that the BLS figures are median wages earned and the Landscape figures reflect starting wages, it is not surprising that the BLS figures are higher. It is noteworthy that public school kindergarten teachers' median wage is more than twice that for center teachers in the BLS dataset. Some of this discrepancy is due to educational qualifications, given that school-based teachers typically have at least a bachelor's degree and the majority of center lead teachers do not.

Another administrative data source is the OPEN Initiative, Missouri's registry for early childhood and afterschool professionals. Because professionals are not required to join the registry, data reported may not be representative of all workers. Based on data from 2013-15 for Jackson County (The National Workforce Registry Alliance, 2015), center lead teachers earned \$11.66 an hour ( $n = 244$ ) and center assistant teachers earned \$9.93 an hour ( $n = 103$ ). These figures are somewhat higher than those reported for Phase 1, which may be due in part to the fact that the Landscape surveys asked about starting wages rather than current wages for positions. Kansas does not have a registry for early childhood/afterschool professionals.

The wages for ECE workers is one of the primary challenges of the field. A study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center (2015) found that nearly half (46%) of child care workers in the nation received some form of public assistance during the previous three years.

**Figure 32**

**Average Starting Hourly Wage for Teachers by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**

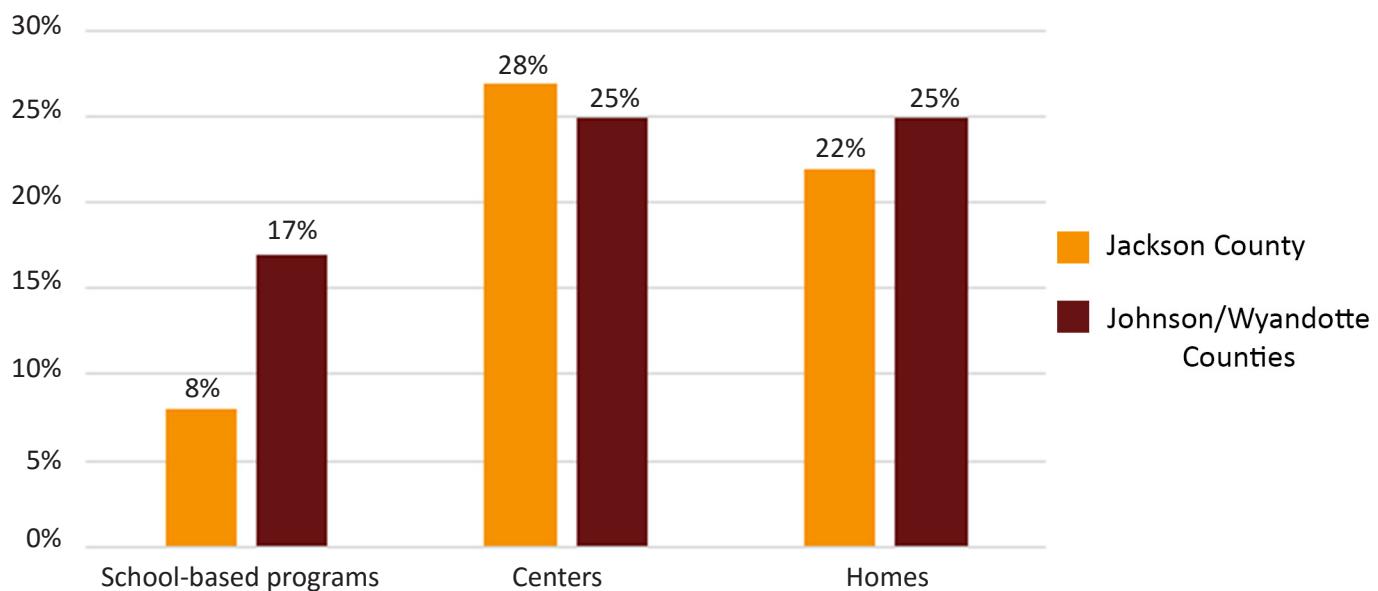


Teacher turnover is a potentially costly factor for EC programs given the amount of professional development they receive in curriculum implementation, assessment, and child development, particularly in programs of higher quality. As shown in Figure 33, lead teacher/provider turnover rates were lower in school-based programs than centers and homes. Numerous reasons help to explain the turnover rates between program types. Because school-based lead teachers typically earn more than center lead teachers, center leads, especially those with bachelor's degrees, often leave centers to work in schools. Based on anecdotal evidence, teachers move a fair amount between centers. The low turnover rate for school-based programs can be attributed to higher wages, better benefits, and stability of position compared to the market-driven nature of centers and homes. In addition, there appears to be less movement between schools due to potential opportunity costs, such as losing credit on a career lattice. Home-based providers face somewhat different challenges with respect to closing, including difficulty meeting expenses and low subsidy reimbursements.

The turnover rates for centers and homes were similar between the two regions. However, the turnover rate for Jackson County school-based programs was less than half the turnover rate for Johnson/Wyandotte school programs. The recent funding problems with Kansas public schools may be one factor contributing to this difference seen across the state line.

**Figure 33**

**Average Lead Teacher/Provider Turnover Rates by Program Type for Jackson and Johnson/Wyandotte Counties**



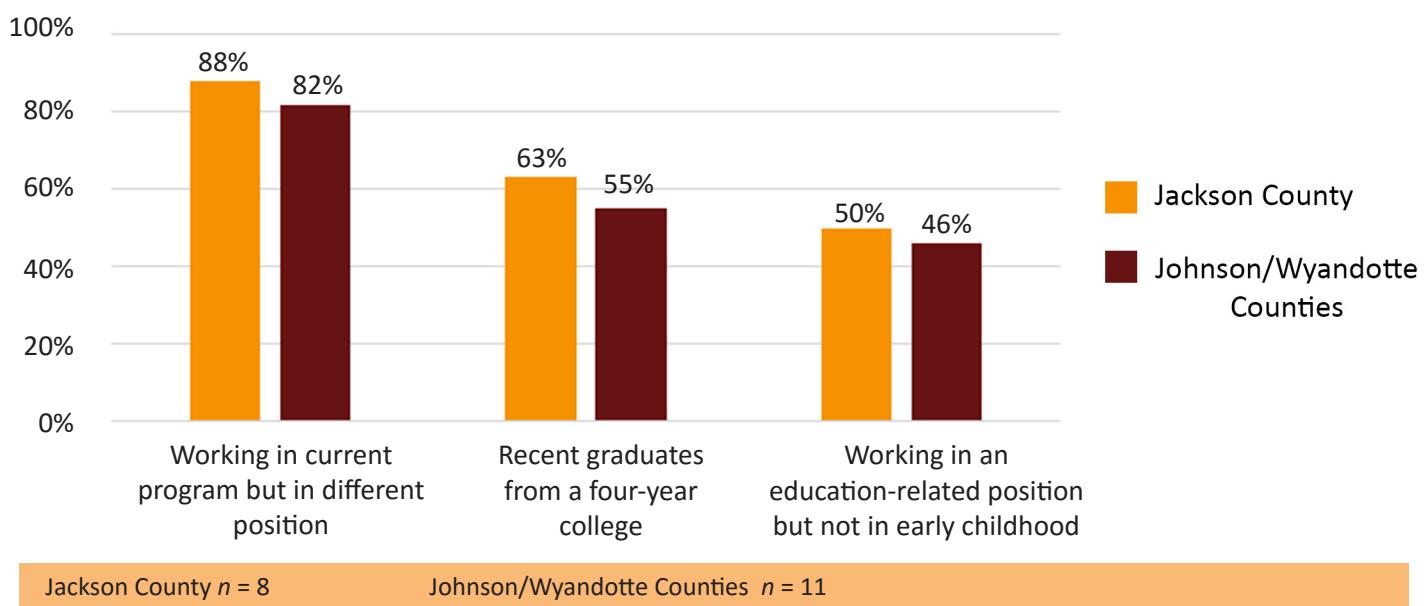
Note. The turnover rate for homes is actually the percent of home providers who reported they were considering closing.

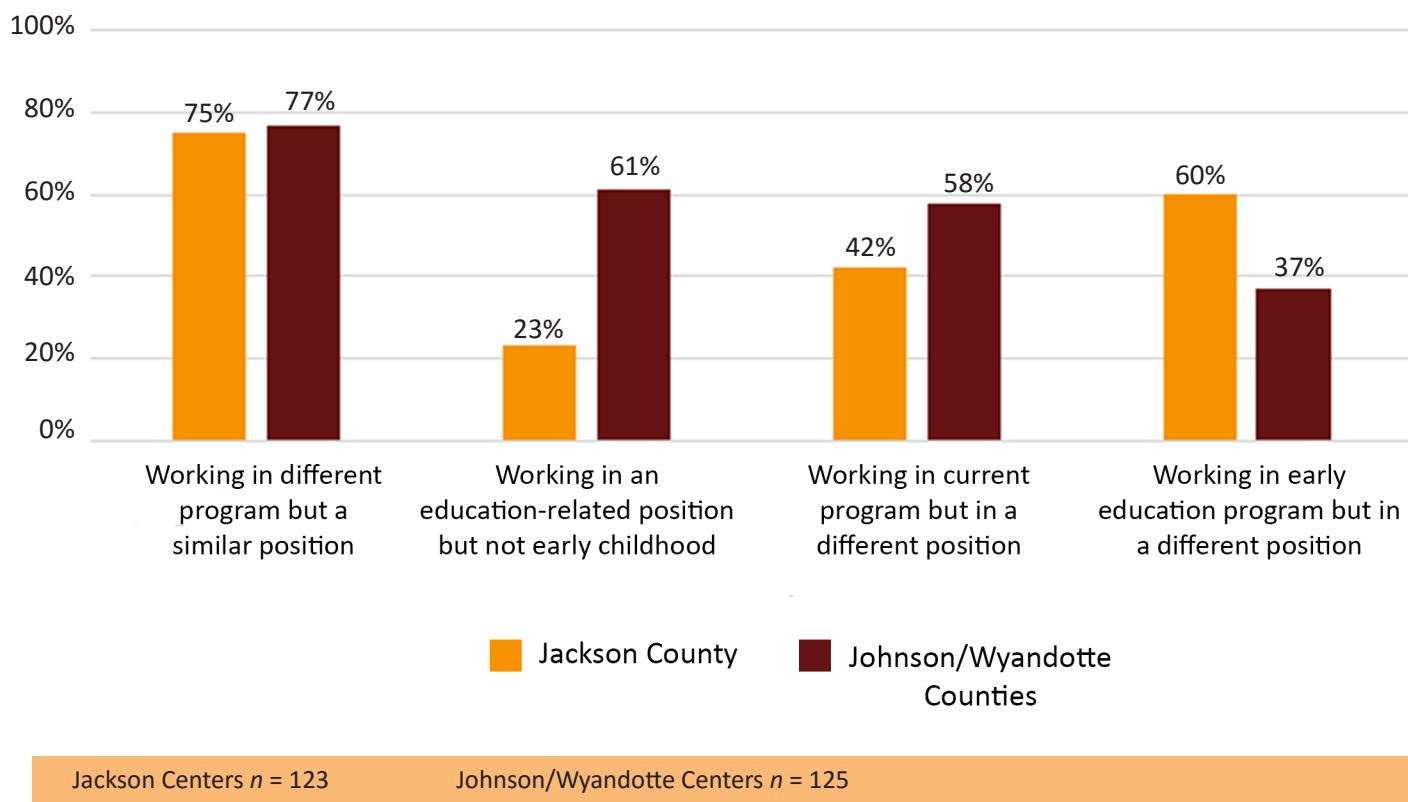
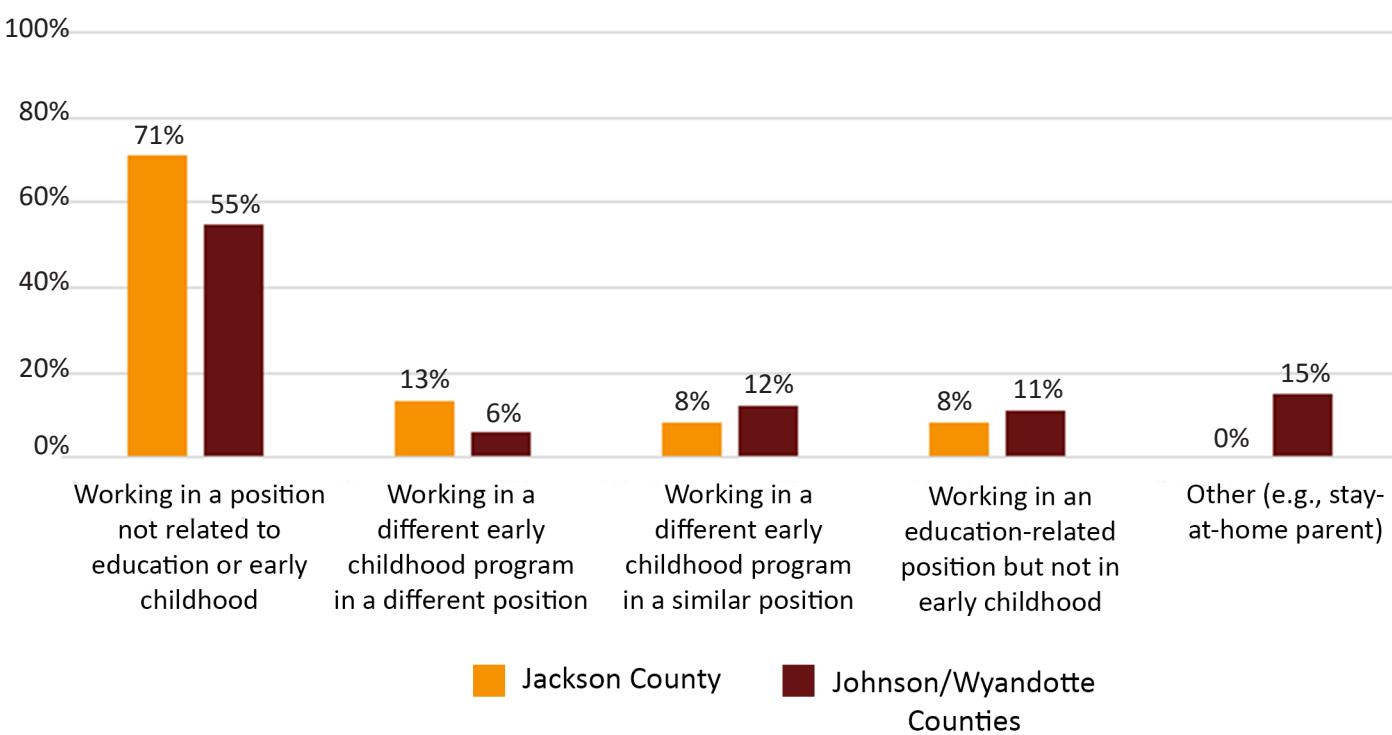
Jackson:	School n = 6	Centers n = 119	Homes n = 76
Johnson/Wyandotte:	School n = 11	Centers n = 124	Homes n = 65

Issues regarding the staff pipeline to programs were highlighted as being of great interest to the Collaborative. Programs were asked to report on what lead teachers—in the case of home programs, the primary provider—were doing prior to working in their current position. Although respondents were asked to rank their choices, the figures reported here represent the percentage of respondents citing a choice regardless of ranking (see Figures 34-36). Across both regions, school staff cited working in the same program but in a different position as the most common prior employment status, which suggests that respondents were promoted within the program. Center staff were most likely to cite working in a different program but in a similar position, which corresponds with the turn-over rate seen in centers. School-based programs were the only program type to mention that their lead teachers were recent graduates from a four-year college; this finding is consistent with the higher education levels of school-based lead teachers. Providers in home-based programs across both regions reported coming into the field without any education experience. This finding, coupled with the lower education levels achieved by most home providers, provides evidence that the home providers were not as likely to have the same experience and qualifications as staff working in centers and schools. For center-based staff in Jackson County, the second most endorsed option was working in an early education program but in a different position; for Johnson/Wyandotte Counties, the second highest option was working in an education-related position but not early childhood (see Figure 29). This finding suggests that the pipeline for center teachers on the Kansas side may be different than the Missouri side, with less of a specific emphasis on early childhood. The reasons for this difference are unclear.

**Figure 34**

### School-based Lead Teachers Employment Prior to Current Position



**Figure 35****Center Lead Teacher Employment Prior to Current Position****Figure 36****Home Provider Employment Prior to Current Position**Jackson Home Providers *n* = 75Johnson/Wyandotte Home Providers *n* = 65

## KEY LANDSCAPE FINDINGS

Below are key results from Phases 1 and 2 survey reports. Broadly speaking, most of the differences seen between regions are due to the disparate policy contexts of Missouri and Kansas. The policy differences with respect to child care subsidy and accreditation all favor Missouri programs. Most of the discrepancies between program types, which typically favor school-based programs over centers and homes, can be attributed to differences in resources and expectations for accountability.

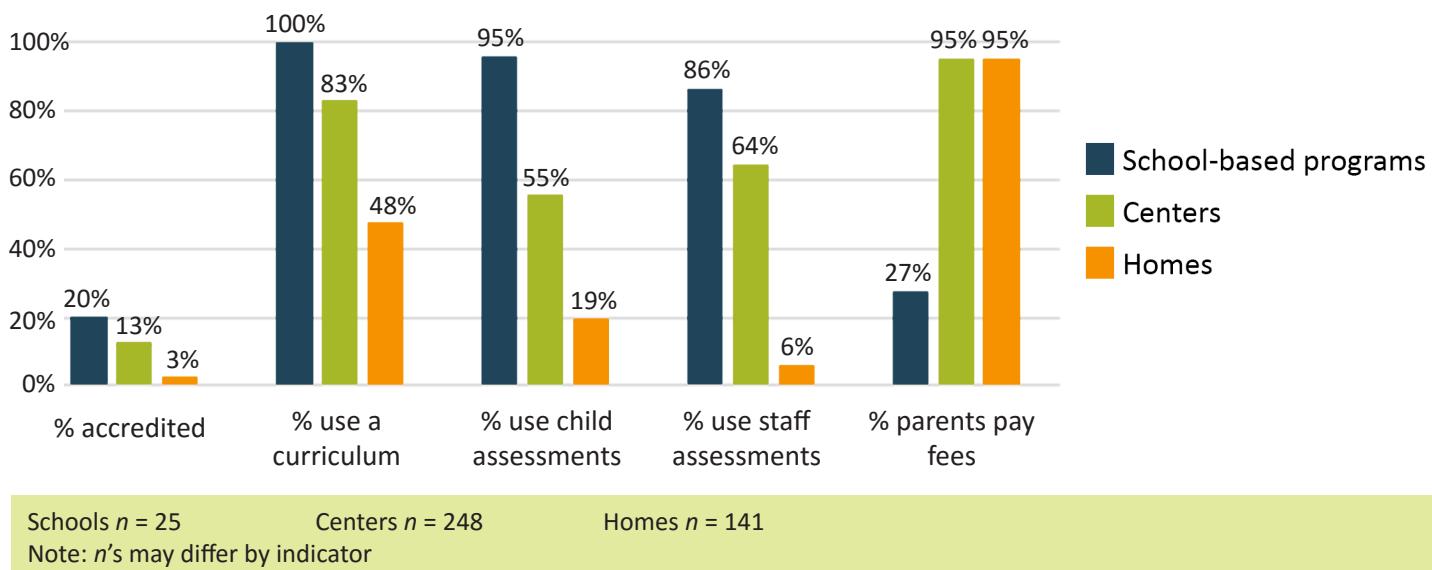
### Program Characteristics

For the programs surveyed across the three counties, centers served the majority of children (74%), followed by school-based programs (22%), then home-based programs (4%). As shown in Figure 37, school-based programs, centers, and homes differed with respect to program characteristics across both Phases. Compared to centers and homes, school-based programs were more likely to be accredited, use a curriculum, assess children, and employ staff assessments. In turn, centers were more likely than homes to meet these conditions. Centers and homes relied most heavily on parent fees, as well as child care subsidies, to fund their programs. Schools reported access to other funding sources, such as Head Start and state-based preschool grants, which are not easily available to centers and not available at all to homes.

One of the most important findings is the lack of accredited programs in both regions, which is especially noteworthy in Kansas where no school-based or home-based programs were accredited in the sample. Because of differing state policies, Missouri programs have more incentives and supports to reach accreditation than Kansas programs.

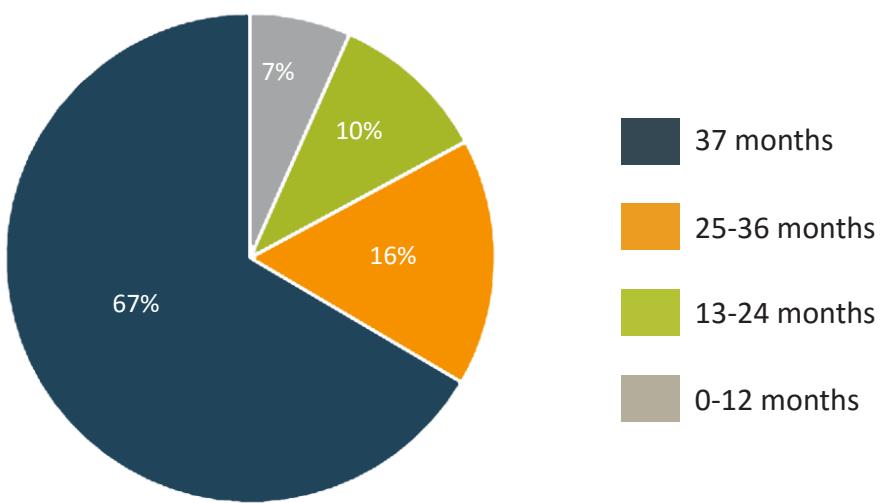
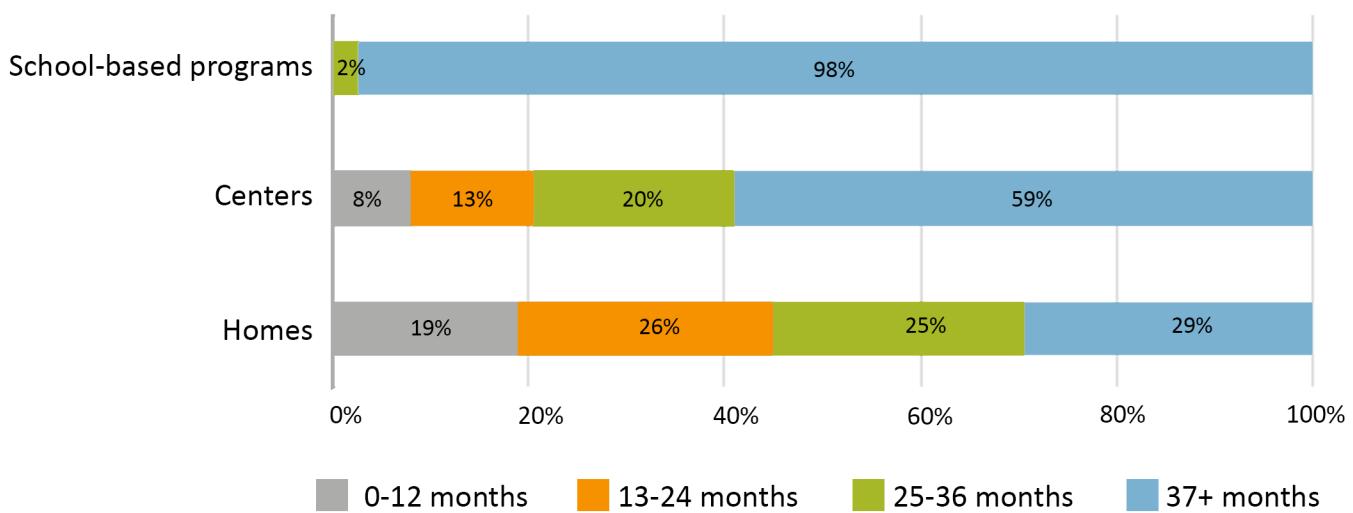
Figure 37

Selected Program Characteristics across Phases 1 and 2

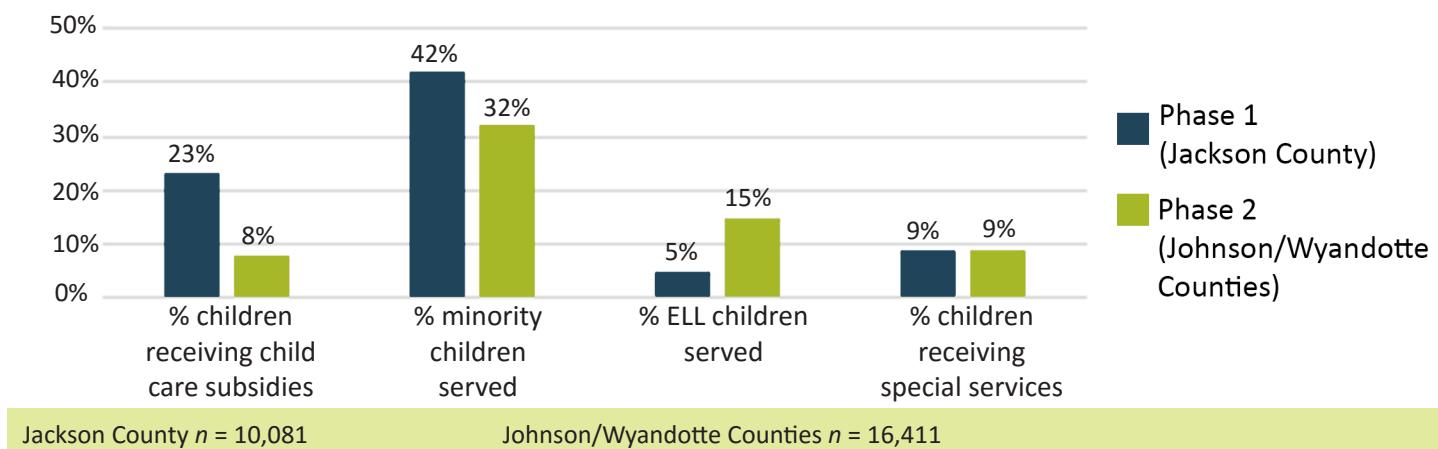


### Child Characteristics

As shown in Figure 38, the programs surveyed served more children three years and older (67%) than children younger than three (33%). Children under the age of three were served mostly in homes and centers, whereas school-based programs almost exclusively served children three years or older (see Figure 39).

**Figure 38****Children Served by Age Group across Phases 1 and 2****Figure 39****Age of Children Served by Program Type across Phases 1 and 2**Schools *n* = 5,698Centers *n* = 18,401Homes *n* = 1,009

As shown in Figure 40, the characteristics of children served by the participating programs differed between phases. Programs in Johnson/Wyandotte Counties served a larger proportion of English Language Learners (ELLs) than those in Jackson County. Two reasons for the discrepancy between the two regions are the higher percentage of Latinos/Hispanics and the higher percentage of residents who speak languages other than English on the Kansas side. For both regions, more ELL children were served in school-based programs than in centers and homes.

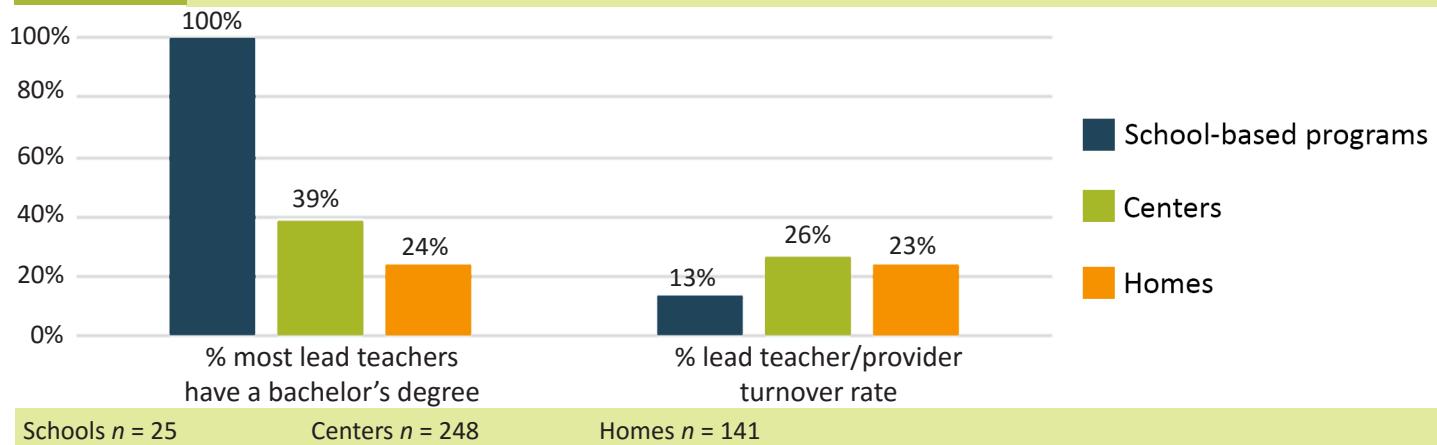
**Figure 40****Selected Child Characteristics by Phase**Jackson County  $n = 10,081$ Johnson/Wyandotte Counties  $n = 16,411$ 

A critical finding is that the two regions differed in the extent to which they served children from families with low incomes. Programs in Jackson County served a larger percentage of children receiving subsidies (23%) than those in Johnson/Wyandotte (8%), mostly due to differences in income demographics and the greater availability of child care subsidies in Missouri. Fortunately, families with low incomes on both sides appeared to be accessing the few accredited programs at roughly the same rate as families with higher incomes.

However, the data suggest that there were differences between the two regions with respect to how frequently minority children accessed accredited programs. In Jackson County, accredited programs served a higher percentage of minority children than non-accredited programs (62% vs. 38%). In Johnson/Wyandotte Counties, the opposite was true (17% vs. 34%). A potential reason for this difference is that most of the accredited programs on the Kansas side were in Johnson County, which has relatively fewer minority children compared to Wyandotte and Jackson Counties.

**Staff Characteristics**

As shown in Figure 41, there were large differences in highest education level for lead teachers/providers among program types. All school-based programs reported that most of their lead teachers had a bachelor's degree or higher. For centers, the percentage was significantly lower, with home providers the least likely to report having a bachelor's degree. There were also county differences; a higher percentage of Johnson County programs (53%) reported that most of their lead teachers/providers have a bachelor's degree compared to programs in Jackson (25%) and Wyandotte (31%) Counties.

**Figure 41****Selected Staff Characteristics by Program Type**

Note. The turnover rate for homes is actually the percent of home providers who reported they were considering closing.

Figure 41 also shows that lead teacher/provider turnover rates were lower in school-based programs than centers and homes in both phases. Higher wages, better benefits, and stability of school-based positions contribute to the retention of lead teachers in schools.

**Figure 42****Average Starting Salary for Lead Teachers by Program Type**

As shown in Figure 42, starting hourly wages for school-based lead teachers were more than twice that for center lead teachers in both regions. (Home providers were not asked about their wages.) The differences in education level for lead teachers in school-based programs and centers explains much of the difference in average hourly wages for teachers in these two groups. For the most part, wages were similar across both regions.

The survey findings about the staff pipeline to programs yielded some interesting differences among program types. Across both regions, school staff cited working in the same program but in a different position (e.g., moving from assistant to lead teacher) as their most common prior employment status. Center staff were most likely to cite working in a different program but in a similar position, which corresponds with the turnover rate seen in centers. Home-based providers across both regions were most likely to report that their job prior to working as a provider was in a field outside of education. Given that home providers were less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to school-based and center lead teachers, these findings taken together suggest that home providers generally have less experience and qualifications than teachers working in centers and schools.

# CONCLUSIONS

Based on the background information and findings from the Phase 1 and 2 reports, the following conclusions are drawn about the ECE landscape of Greater Kansas City.

## **The child population served by participating ECE programs is diverse.**

- The percentage of minority children served by participating Jackson County programs was 42%, compared to 32% for programs in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.
- In Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, 15% of children served by participating programs were ELL, compared to 5% for Jackson County.
- Across all three counties, 9% of children received special services.
- In Jackson County, 23% of children received child care subsidies compared to 8% of children in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties. The difference between the two regions is partly based on demographics as well as policy differences between the two states.

## **Most children served by participating programs were three years or older.**

- Two-thirds of children served were ages 36 months or older, whereas one third were less than three years old.
- Children under the age of three were served mostly in homes and centers, whereas school-based programs almost exclusively served children three years or older.

## **The proportion of accredited ECE programs is low.**

- Twelve percent of Jackson County programs were accredited, compared to 7% of Johnson/Wyandotte County programs.
- In the three counties, the number of accredited programs reached its highest level in 2006 and has decreased considerably since.

## **State-based incentives and supports for accreditation and quality improvement are lacking.**

- Neither state has a currently functioning QRIS system (both states are in pilot phases).
- In Missouri, state funds for increasing ECE program quality and helping programs achieve accreditation were cut in 2012. There are currently no state dollars for accreditation support.
- Missouri provides some incentives for programs to achieve accreditation by offering enhanced child care subsidies to programs that are accredited. Kansas does not have similar policies.
- Kansas currently has no incentives or state-based programs to support accreditation or quality improvement.

## **Compared to school-based programs, centers and homes have fewer financial resources.**

- Centers and homes rely most heavily on parent fees, as well as child care subsidies, to fund their programs.
- Lack of resources and supports likely impacts the ability of centers and homes to hire qualified staff and to embrace important aspects of quality, including curriculum usage, use of child assessments to inform instruction, and staff assessments.

**Compared to school-based programs, centers and homes tend to have less qualified teachers.**

- Center teachers and home providers typically make less money, have fewer benefits, and have less education than school-based teachers.
- Teacher turnover is higher in centers than schools, partly due to the disparities in wages and benefits. One-quarter of home providers reported that they were thinking of closing in the coming year.

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